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THE POLITICAL RELATIONS OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY

WITH A NEW STUDY OF THE TEMPTATION
AND AN APPENDIX ON
'THE POWERS OF THE SANHEDRIN'

BY

STEPHEN LIBERTY, M.A.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD
PERPETUAL CURATE OF WALNEY ISLAND
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Πιστεύω καὶ βαπτιζομαι εἰς . . . τὸν . . . πολιτευσάμενον ὁσίως κατὰ τοὺς νόμους τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ σταυρωθέντα ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ ἀποθανόντα ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. . . .

Symbolum apud Constitutiones Apostolicas (vii. 41).

'I believe and am baptized into . . . (the Lord Jesus Christ) . . . Who framed His conduct holily according to the laws of God His Father, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died for our sakes' . . .

[*Note.*—The word πολιτεύεσθαι appearing in this Creed and in that quoted on the title-page is not, of course, confined to political action in the narrow sense: but it connotes the allegiance to some community, or to some theory of life, showing itself in human conduct (Acts xxiii. 1, Phil. i. 27, iii. 17–20), even though it be an allegiance centred 'in heaven' (Phil. iii. 20). It is the life of conscious motive and interest, directed to some purpose, as opposed to mere existence under earthly conditions; and is doubtless attributed to Christ in order to emphasize the effective reality of His relationship with human life against Docetic or Irruptionist views.]

Ὁ πεμψας τὸν Ἰησοῦν Θεός . . . ἐποίησε πανταχοῦ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιστροφῆς καὶ διορθώσεως κρατῆσαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον Ἰησοῦ, καὶ γενέσθαι πανταχοῦ ἐκκλησίας ἀντιπολιτευομένας ἐκκλησίαις δεισιδαιμόνων καὶ ἀκολάστων καὶ ἀδίκων. . . . Εἰ δὲ ταῦθ' οὕτως ἔχει, πῶς οὐκ εὔλογον νομίζειν περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, τοσαῦτα συστῆσαι δεδυνημένου, ὅτι οὐχ ἡ τυχοῦσα θειότης ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ;

ORIGEN, *c. Celsum* (iii. 29, 31),

'God, Who sent Jesus, brought about all over the world for the conversion and amendment of mankind the dominance of Jesus' gospel, and produced everywhere communities rivalling in the social field the political organizations of superstitious, licentious, and unjust men. . . . But if this is the case [viz. the moral superiority of organized Christian life], it is surely reasonable to believe of Jesus, Who has been able to make such constructive changes, that no common degree of godhead belonged to Him.'

[The Christian apologist here argues that the social power and admitted moral elevation of the Church, as traceable to Jesus, and as so palpable a benefit to the world, is the real proof of His divinity; not any emphasis on the mysterious and miraculous elements of the Gospel, such as Celsus claimed to be able to parallel in heathen story.]

PREFACE

THE following study, planned and begun amid the leisure and other advantages afforded by the position of a librarian, has had to be finished as best it might in the distracting surroundings of a large industrial parish. It will be easy to see, then, in these pages the usual defects of books written at a distance from learned society—neglect of authorities which should have been consulted, lamentable gaps in necessary knowledge, conclusions in detail too hastily reached or which might have been more fully supported by longer investigation—but not, the writer trusts, any serious misunderstanding or undue pressing of the evidence that has been adduced.

The main ideas of the thesis have been long pondered, and suggested themselves in the first instance as likely solutions of exegetical problems. The treatment of the Temptation narrative, e.g., as *wholly* symbolical and as having primary allusion to national affairs, is submitted with some confidence to expositors as a more satisfactory line of interpretation than any which the present writer, at least, has ever seen. The explanation given of this document may not be right in every detail, but the re-examination of the Scriptural parallels and the supposition of apocalyptic symbolism seemed to yield results that were worth submitting to the learned, even on this well-worn theme. Similarly the usual modern exegesis of 'Render unto Caesar,' &c., as, so to speak, the shelving of political questions for

the Christian, will not, I venture to think, stand before a closer investigation of the language used and a due weighing of the historical situation ; while our Lord's denunciation of the Jerusalem ' robbers ' affords a momentary glimpse into the political background of the story, which the commentators have strangely missed. I hope also to have thrown some light on our Lord's questions about the Feeding Miracles in St. Mark viii. 14–21, and on the incident of the Syro-Phoenician woman.

The use of the history of the time as an aid to the understanding of the Gospels is, of course, no novelty for the general reader, as perhaps the past popularity of translations of Josephus would alone be enough to prove. Nevertheless, as regards the wider environment of world-politics, the study is somewhat out of fashion now, more stress being laid on the narrower field of Palestinian thought, and especially of apocalyptic ideas. From the older devout view that all problems, past, present, and future, entered into our Lord's earthly consciousness and ministerial purpose, there has been a reaction tending to the extreme view that His outlook was limited to the most fanatical expectations of Jewish eschatology. Why considerations and influences which were taken into account by native politicians, by the Herods, by St. Paul, Philo, and Josephus, and by the whole Dispersion, should be regarded as having no interest for One whose mission at the time and afterwards profoundly impressed these various types of mind, is a question which I for one do not think our extremer ' eschatological ' interpreters have yet answered. Till they do, I believe that the general reader, though appreciating the fresh light which the study of Apocalyptic has thrown on

the Gospels, will still like to picture for himself the historical situation of the world at that period, as having significance in Christ's Ministry. The main object of these pages is to foster, though not to satisfy, that historical interest ; and the author will be well content if in a few points (e. g. the importance of the Herodian element in the situation, the nature of the Roman toleration of Judaism, the native demand for direct imperial government, and the comparative freedom of the Sanhedrin under the procurators) he has been able to suggest new applications of known facts to the elucidation of the Gospels.

But besides the exegetical and historical interest of the theme, there has been another motive for investigation of this subject, and that is to help to vindicate afresh the right of the Christian Church to hold up the example of its Master in dealing with the policies and social conditions of contemporary life. The view men take of the Incarnation—of the nature and extent of the contact between the Son of God and human conditions—has always had a connexion (conscious or unconscious) with the nature and extent of the Christian claim to redress the wrong of the world. Ignatius, in warning the Church of Smyrna (Smyrn. vi. 2) against the Docetic teachers, to whom the Son of God on earth was but a phantom, points out the practical effect of such teaching—' they reck not of charity, of widow, orphan, or afflicted, of whether a man is bond or free, of the hungry or thirsty '. Celsus, with his heathen conception of divine incarnation as something to be evidenced by mysteries and miracles, and not desiring any reconstruction of society from God's intervention on earth, naturally turned a blind eye to the true evidence of Christ's godhead

in benefits to mankind—in the Christian churches contesting the social field (ἀντιπολιτευομένας) with the assemblies of the world (Origen, c. Celsum iii. 29 and ff.). The Arian heresy, which shrank from bringing True God into the limitations of ordinary human life, and therefore conceived of the earthly course of Jesus as of the manifestation of a demi-God (neither God nor man), exactly suited the book of the conservative politicians of the Eastern Empire, who did not want a Christ interfering too authoritatively with the constitution of the world as they knew it. The subordination of the Son to the Father bore for them the welcome implication of the subordination of Christianity to the older Natural Religion,[1] under which the State had always been the final earthly authority. The worship of Christ, as a cult, had proved itself a truer and stronger religious sanction for the imperial system than Caesar-worship, but of any claims for it involving more than sanction and alliance the conservatism of the East was instinctively suspicious. And so it may be that in the aspirations of the modern democratic movement for drastic social change, and in what appears to that movement as a pathetic helplessness on the part of the Christian Church to offer anything more than a cult which does not touch its real needs, there is involved a challenge to theologians to revise their interpretation of the Gospels in a more orthodox direction. We need, perhaps, to face with more courage the full implications of the Catholic doctrine that Jesus Christ was Very Man, and to be confident that ' the quest of the historical Jesus ' will yet vindicate His close touch with all the problems

[1] The late Rev. C. L. Marson on ' The Social Teaching of the Fathers ' in the volume entitled *Vox Clamantium*.

of human existence, and in so doing vindicate His 'supernatural claims' to more purpose than any conception of Him as removed by His divine nature or by His eschatological expectation above the political and social concerns of that age. This, at any rate, is the writer's belief and hope, and he offers this attempt to prove political affinities in Christ's Ministry as a humble contribution to the cause of orthodox theology against the 'eschatological' attack of the moment, as well as the expression of his dearest convictions as to the bearing of the Gospel on the Labour and Socialist movements of our time.

There is, I feel, an appropriateness, which may excuse the presumption, in the dedication of this little treatise to the memory of Mr. Gladstone, the founder of St. Deiniol's Library. In more senses than one, the dominating motive of that great man's life may be said to have been the relation of politics to religion, theoretically and practically. The allusion to the intimate practical connexion for him of the two spheres, which I have ventured to make, rests on the authority of Dean Church (*Life and Letters*, Eversley edition, p. 365): '[Some one] happened to say in the presence of the Dean that he believed Mr. Gladstone was a thoroughly insincere man. The Dean was sitting in his chair when the remark was made, but he instantly rose, his face even paler than it usually was, and he said, evidently with the strongest suppression of personal feeling: "Insincere! Sir, I tell you that to my knowledge Mr. Gladstone goes from communion with God to the great affairs of State."'

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY. pp. 1–5

The tendency of the new 'eschatological' interpretation of the Gospels to isolate Christ's earthly ministry from the subsequent achievements of Christianity in the world

seems to reinforce the older practical teaching which has deprecated any appeal to the supreme Christian authority in political and social questions.

On the other hand, if there are authentic traces in the Gospel story that the historical situation of the world at that time entered into the motives of the ministry

as the basis of a definite attitude to national policy,

and as giving reason for the final self-surrender of Jesus,

and if the historical situation was, in point of fact, modified in accordance with this supposed manifestation of outlook,

there is still ground for finding in the subsequent course of history the proof of His authority and the direct continuation of His work,

and also for not excluding the policies and problems of 'this world' from the range of His interest as evidenced by the Gospels.

Such traces of the *political relations of Christ's ministry*, seen on the background of the world's need at that time and of the particular circumstances of the Gospel history, it is the purpose of this essay to emphasize.

Divisions of the subject.

CHAPTER I

THE CRITICAL MOMENT OF HUMAN HISTORY: CUR DEUS CHRISTUS. pp. 6–18

An hypothesis of external circumstance is required to commend any ancient revelation to the minds of the present day

and an element of contemporary history which renders such aid to the understanding of the Gospels may be found in the momentous relations of Jew and Roman in the first century in their bearing on the fate of religion.

Unique features of Judaism as a national cult brought up against the special work of the Empire towards a uniform economy.
The Roman ideal for humanity (Seneca, *De Clem.* i).
The anti-social ' contrariety ' of Judaism.
The two alternatives to disaster :
a national conversion ;
' Christ the end of the Law to win righteousness for all believers ' (Rom. x. 4).
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Our Lord's denunciation of the Temple authorities ;
its political import.
The Hasmonaean outlook (Tacitus, The ' Assumption of Moses ')
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and religious apostasy.

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The history of this policy,
the ' alliance ' with Rome and the special treatment accorded to Judaism.
The prospect offered of realizing the national destiny.
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1. The ideal of Roman imperialism.
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THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD AS A PREPARATION FOR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. pp. 43–54.

The politico-religious aspirations of Judaism admittedly gave place, after A. D. 70, to a new political attitude on the part of the Early Church towards the world-power.

Was this change consciously inaugurated in the ministry of Jesus—

a departure which would imply that His work on earth included a judgement on political relationships ?

The Temptation-narrative,

with its position as an introductory forecast of principles, and its early date,

yields some preliminary indications of a national interest attributable to our Lord's mission :

1. It depicts, with detailed parallelism, the re-enactment of an ancient national experience,
   and draws its moral from three great maxims of the national vocation ;
   nor can this setting be discounted as the illustration of second-hand authority.
2. Interpreted as having reference to action on the national stage, the experience undergone by our Lord might suitably be conveyed to the disciples in this form of narrative at an early period of their training : while, if the national setting were merely illustrative, the disclosure in this form would not answer any contemporary need of edification.
3. The vocation to be ' Son of God ', on which the narrative turns, bears most readily a nationalist interpretation, if the document represents a contemporary tradition ;
   and this interpretation explains best the abandonment of the title in the framing of the temptation to ' worship Satan.'

CHAPTER IV

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE NATIVE POLICIES IN THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD. pp. 55–77

The symbolic character of the Temptation narrative

should exclude also a too literal application to the unique position of the Tempted One ;

and the usual interpretations obtained by that method lack moral probability.

The allurements described are better referred to general national tendencies which seemed to define all the alternative paths of public action at that time,

and which might appropriately be brought under review at the moment of public vocation.

(This significance is more clear in the order of the Temptations given by St. Matthew.)

A. *The Irreligion of the Jerusalem Leaders* (*Indifference to God's Promises*). pp. 59–61

The simple demand for the satisfaction of hunger from defined material resources

symbolizes the Sadducaic policy of self-preservation with its indifference to the greater *promises* ('the words proceeding from the mouth of God').

B. *The Irreligion of Messianism* ('*Tempting God*'). pp. 61–8

The Pharisaic ideal—the King in 'the Holy City' and on the Temple roof, throwing himself against the Gentile peril to force God's intervention:

the possible 'apocalyptic' intention of this symbolic description.

In any case the Scriptural phrase of 'tempting God', with its history (Exodus, Psalms, Isaiah, Judith) and affinities, fits nothing so well as the attitude and political hopes of Messianism (Margoliouth)

and is applied to other features of the Pharisaic outlook.

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The substantial object of the vocation offered in the Third Temptation without its national form

corresponded with the promise of Herodianism and, like that, bore with it the condition of Caesar-worship which here, as in Rev. ii. 13, is apocalyptically represented by the worship of Satan. The later repetition of the lure at Caesarea-Philippi.

The political interpretation of this narrative does not explain away the revelation of temptation as a spiritual factor in the experience of our Lord;

for there were other occasions of temptation,

and in any case some earthly circumstance (and what more

typical can be found than national conditions ?) is required as the basis for any really human experience of the sort.

But even this record alone, so interpreted, embodies the essential principles of loyalty to divine vocation as against the attractions of selfishness, formalism, and contentment with worldly achievement:

while, as a determination of attitude to national policy, the Temptation was also the essential preliminary of the Redemptive Death.

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The continuation, as regards scope, of the Baptist's work.

Hope, at first, of corporate repentance.

Relations with the official critics.

2. *The appeal of Jesus was not limited by 'eschatological' considerations, but demanded a seminal change in the national outlook.* pp. 82–7.

The prevalent 'eschatological' interpretation in its extreme form would exclude the interest for our Lord of the historical position of Judaism:

but, even if this 'bedside' attitude to the world could ever produce a religion,

its supposed symptoms are palpably absent from the origins of Christianity (St. James, St. Paul, 'the condition of slaves in Capernaum').

That eschatological belief at least did not debar our Lord from wide vistas of practical policy, is seen in the enunciation of seminal principles, in the prophetic demand for amendment, and in the uncompromising method of the attack ('new cloth' and 'new wine'), which in the realm of ideas betokens a wide outlook on the present order (the parallel of Revolutionary Socialism).

And why the opposition, if the message was purely eschatological?

3. *The appeal of Jesus was for a policy of humanization and extension in face of the politico-religious crisis.* pp. 88–93.

The promise of 'the sign of Jonah' the foreshadowing of a striking victory, not only for Jesus Himself, but for the principle of extension to the Gentiles;

and the practical demonstration of this duty was given in the mission to Galilee—

a divergence from Sadducaic neglect of vocation

and the inhuman exclusiveness of the Pharisees, which sufficiently indicated our Lord's position in relation to the world-crisis of that age.

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Reasons for silence in the earlier period;

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The probable foresight even of a Roman punishment.

The esoteric connexion of this juncture in the history with the general political relations of Christ's mission.

The teaching of the Feeding Miracles—

increase independent of material resources,

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was intended to explain the abandonment of earthly prospects of success (especially now 'the leaven of Herod') for the post-

Resurrection spread of the kingdom through the work of the disciples;

as similar illustrations ('the children's bread' and the 'grain of wheat') pointed to the impossibility of advance before the Death was accomplished.

The incident of Caesarea-Philippi

as the consummation of the plan of victory,

as the refusal of the last alternative.

2. *The interaction of causes which brought about the condemnation of Jesus in the particular form that it took.* pp. 121–30.

There is no spontaneous courting of death beyond the proclamation of His national policy, which thus remains as the substantial ground of the rulers' action:

yet, when the decision was taken, He contributed to the issue with all its political significance

by neglecting the opportunity of escape,

by first silence and then admission before the Sanhedrin (ensuring the official rejection of the Messiah, as well as the practical necessity, for expediency's sake, of calling in the Roman power with the surrender which that involved),

by similar appreciation and control of the situation in the Roman court,

and, in both cases, by eliciting the involuntary acceptance of His kingship.

EPILOGUE. pp. 131–40

The two conflicting political forces,

which embodied 'the sin of the world' in threatening disaster to religion at that crisis,

and to which (according to our view) Christ's ministry had its message,

were to all appearance not stayed from the shock of battle.

Yet the worst effect of the conflict had been averted in the preservation of the essential truths of Judaism through just those mitigations of the political antagonism for which Christ appealed—

the shedding of Messianism,

and the recognition of the due place of religion in regard to human welfare.

How, in particular, the death of Christ provided this redemption in the sphere of history—

(*a*) *The argument of the Cross against the Jewish view of the Law.*

The Crucifixion (followed by the Resurrection) both served to

identify Jesus finally with the Messiah of prophecy, thus abrogating the Law,

and, as the startling effect of the nation's misinterpretation of the Promise, took away all ground for its exclusive claim.

So the essential Israel was extricated from the ruins of Jewish nationalism, and 'the whole nation perished not'. (The witness of St. Paul to this argument.)

(*b*) *The argument of the Cross in the conversion of the Gentile world.*

Gentile blindness to the spiritual value of religion was shamed and removed by the crying injustice and folly (ever re-enacted in the Persecutions) of crushing without political excuse an innocuous faith.

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INTRODUCTORY

In the representations of some recent critics the 'historical Jesus' has very little to do with Christianity as a leavening and progressive force in normal human society. According to the view just now fashionable His chief contribution to the enlightenment of the race was an intense visualization of eternal realities under the form of an imminent catastrophe of existing conditions, which He thought was to centre in His own person. The catastrophe so conceived did not happen; but the first disciples continued to expect it, and under this delusion did a great work for the world. Subsequent Christian teachers who thought they were carrying on that work, though they had abandoned the expectation, were really (according to this theory) only working for a human ideal of progress, to which the 'historical Jesus' had nothing to say. It follows that His earthly Ministry is of value (and that, 'symbolic' value) to those only who despair of any normal reconciliation between the facts of the world and eternal truth—to those who would find escape from a hopeless situation in a frame of mind which, though it has drawn no verification from objective experience, may claim to have brought its possessors nearer to transcendental peace than any other belief.[1]

This theoretical attitude to the Gospel history, though emanating from a different camp, has the same

[1] The reference is to the 'eschatological' theory of interpretation, so ably utilized by the late Fr. Tyrrell in his *Christianity at the Cross-roads*.

practical tendency as another older class of teaching. I refer to those who more or less consistently deprecate any appeal to the authority of Jesus of Nazareth in questions of political and social righteousness.[1] Christ during His earthly life, it is contended, called only individual souls to Himself, bidding them look for a Kingdom transcending ordinary human relationships; He showed no interest in differences of earthly prosperity except in so far as they helped or hindered spiritual progress: though He is allowed (for the 'eschatological' view has not yet been turned to account here) to have foreseen a long process of the kingdoms of the world becoming the Kingdom of God and of His Christ, it was only by the method of building up Christian characters that it was to be realized—for Jesus (according to this view) gives no judgement on worldly governments or policies, nor finds in them, regarded as such, any material to further or endanger His revelation: they are simply things indifferent, from which both He and His true disciples in all ages hold aloof, except so far as a political alliance may sometimes serve the purpose of giving freer course to Christian influence.

It is the object of the following pages to call attention again to certain aspects of the Gospel history, which suggest a distrust of both these expositions as, to say the least, exaggerations. It is hoped to give reasons for believing—as has been believed by many devout Christians through the ages—that our Lord Jesus Christ (with whatever degree of conscious foresight of the subsequent history) did already in His earthly Ministry face

[1] A typical instance of this view is a leading article in the *Church Times* of August 14, 1908. Cf. the present writer's reply in *The Optimist*, October 1908.

the historical situation of the world, as it stood in that century, in such a way as to inaugurate a progressive change for the better : that He did hold out before Israel a course of *national* action, which at that crucial moment its vocation demanded, and up to which all its previous training had led : that this appeal to a nation, though, as made by God 'in a Son' (Heb. i. 2), it was farther reaching than any temporary political or social question, necessarily involved the recognition of its Exponent as standing in more or less sympathetic relation with the different parties and classes which were the elements in the historical situation : and that, when the appeal was more and more seen to be unavailing, and the steps of the Master were turned to Jerusalem and to certain death, still it was not sheer despair or delusive hope of final catastrophe that prompted Him, but rather faith—faith, buttressed by the teaching of Prophecy and a deep appraisal of the political situation, that through this self-sacrifice lay the alternative road to the fulfilment of national vocation in the existing world. How far the actual course of events and the new method of redemption were foreseen can only be matter for surmise ; but if we find that the Christian Church did, as the result of the death on the cross, succeed in retrieving what might have seemed an impossible situation and in preserving for the world a spiritual heritage which otherwise would have been lost through political obstinacy and misunderstanding, this will complete our argument as a contribution towards the establishment of three positions which, in the writer's belief, are of vital importance for Christianity :

1. That the Divine authority of Christ's earthly Ministry is witnessed to by results in history.

2. That there is an unbroken connexion (traced here in one department only) between the teaching and policy of Jesus of Nazareth and the achievements of what by an unfortunate nomenclature is nowadays distinguished as 'Christ'.

3. That we have full right to apply *mutatis mutandis* the judgements on temporal matters that can be discerned in the Gospel story to the political and social questions of our own day. For if Jesus can be seen to have enunciated principles and inaugurated methods which carried forward the fortunes of humanity through a dangerous crisis in the early centuries of the Christian era, we may take courage again to seek guidance in His earthly life for the present stage of historical evolution—so it be done with reverence, discernment, and charity.

This Essay, then, deals in brief outline with the 'Political Relations of Christ's Ministry'. It attempts first to show the critical situation in which the spiritual interests of the world stood at that time—a situation which would be, and was, affected by the political action of the nations concerned. After that, the various forces and policies, which found themselves face to face with this problem, must be passed in review. For it is in our Lord's attitude towards, and judgement on, these that we must look for the evidence (within the limits of the earthly Ministry) of His own mission to solve the historical situation, of His own formulation of a true policy for Israel, and of the political bearing of the death on Calvary. One important piece of evidence, in the present writer's opinion, appears in the story of the Temptation, if the interpretation attempted in these pages be the true one. After setting forth the indications of a political

position which might in this sense have been ascribed to Jesus by a contemporary observer, we proceed to look for the point of connexion between this position (if it be a fact) and the 'esoteric' character, as it may be called, which undoubtedly distinguishes the latter part of the Ministry—that is, the concentration of His attention on a small band of disciples, and the deliberate acceptance of death at Jerusalem. Lastly, in a brief view of the period after the Resurrection, I shall endeavour to show how the death on the cross, regarded in one aspect, did solve the politico-religious problem of the age. This historical result alone is strong evidence that that death was no blind act of eschatological fanaticism, but the sane justifiable self-sacrifice of One who, with whatever degree of consciousness and foresight, was loyally carrying out the Divine programme of the national vocation. It is the verification in history of St. Paul's reading of the events, viz. that Christ 'took upon Himself for all time the rôle of executant for the Old Covenant to establish the veracity of God, to the end that He should make good the promises given to the fathers, while the Gentiles also on their part should glorify God for mercy[1] shown, in accordance with the predictions of Scripture' (Rom. xv. 8 f.).

[1] Cf. 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice' in the Gospels.

CHAPTER I

THE CRITICAL MOMENT OF HUMAN HISTORY: CUR DEUS CHRISTUS

'O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? For your kindness is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away. . . . I desire kindness, and not sacrifice.'—Hos. vi. 4, 6.

'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace!'—Luke xix. 42.

'Tu devicto mortis aculeo aperuisti credentibus regna caelorum.'—The *Te Deum*.

No one at this date will quarrel with the desire to view Jesus of Nazareth in relation to the historical situation of the time as we conceive it, even though that aspect of Him is not directly presented by the Gospels. With the growth of the historic sense, inaugurated at the beginning of the last century, it has become a mental necessity for us, if we are to be influenced by a story or a truth of any kind, that it should be presented in such a medium of external circumstance as will serve to link it on to our present experiences. We have to imagine the daily life, the appearance, the interests, of the bygone seer, before we will accept his vision as of vital import in the corresponding details of our own life. 'There *was* a time', says Wordsworth,[1] referring to one particular department of revelation, the poetical—

> There was a time when all mankind
> Did listen with a faith sincere
> To tuneful tongues in mystery versed:
> Then Poets fearlessly rehearsed
> The wonders of a wild career.

[1] Prologue to *Peter Bell*.

But it is now—he pleads—'an age too late' for the world to be stirred by the mere recital of marvels that cannot be brought into connexion with ordinary earthly experience.

Similarly, in studying the Gospels and in making the teaching contained in them real for the present day, it is a great help if we can fix on some contemporary element in the course of the world's history, which even the non-Christian student of events would say was the question of that age, on which all subsequent developments hinged. A framework of circumstance, constructed from our mental furniture apart from the Gospel story itself, is so provided, in which to view the figure of Christ; and in proportion to the correctness of the hypothesis and the extent to which the New Testament evidence is found to fit into it is the gain to belief in, and profitable realization of, the sacred narrative at the present time.

Would many deny that a crucial question of this kind was presented by the political relations of Jew and Roman to one another in the first century A. D.? The problem in the balance was, whether religion, in its highest form yet known, and as a practical influence on life, could survive that breaking-down of national barriers and diffusion of a uniform Italo-Hellenic economy, which constituted the policy of the Roman Empire.[1] None of the pagan religions had ever contrived to retain its character as a national cult after

[1] The use made here and in the following pages of Mommsen's *Judaea and the Jews* in his fifth volume (translated as *The Provinces of the Roman Empire*) will be apparent. It is much to be wished that that great chapter could be issued separately in English as a manual for students of the Gospels. Morrison, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (Fisher Unwin), is also invaluable for this aspect of the subject.

the political identity of its worshippers had been merged in a wider state. This easy surrender was doubtless due, not only to the close connexion of all ancient religions with secular activities (tending to make the former meaningless when independent interests had been suppressed), but also to the lack of personal belief in such cults as really important for life. In the case of the Jews on the other hand the problem was real. Their national religion had hitherto offered a stout resistance to all solvents from outside, and seemed likely to do so, for two main reasons: they did not, so much as other nations, lose their national characteristics when they had to bow to and mix among foreigners: they still regarded themselves as the same people, however governed, and wherever situated: and therefore there was no loss, so far, of the secular sanction for holding to their religion, no reason why they should not still look to Jerusalem as their religious centre as it was their national centre: and further, to reinforce this unimpaired nationality, there had been developed, through a chequered history, sufficient personal grasp of their religion to make it a possession of quite different value from any pagan cult. This position of religious separateness had been maintained without much challenge hitherto, though it went counter to the normal course of history. The first world-powers that swept the Jews into their net had not thoroughly taken up the task of consolidating their subject-nations into one State. Under Persians and Greeks the Jews had to all intents and purposes retained their independence as a politico-religious unit, though nominally they were under suzerains. But the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes in Palestine itself had shown them how easily the world might ask

too much, and had suggested to the devout a new idea, embodied in action by the Maccabees, viz. that a nation's religion, if it is to survive, may require the protection of complete political independence.

Still, it was only when the Romans succeeded to the government of the world that the question which we consider to be the crucial one of our Lord's time began to move forward to an acute stage. We have stated it as it looked from the Jewish point of view, as the problem of combining obedience to God with satisfactory relations to whatever larger social and political system Israel might have to enter—the question, what was to be the attitude of the really religious man of the only type then existing towards the secular interests of wider humanity in which he was now by circumstances involved, and which might very likely come into ruthless conflict with his religion. But the problem has to be viewed on the other side as well. The Romans, too, had an ideal which was a legitimate factor in the question at stake ; there were solid reasons here for a reconsideration by the Jew of his traditional attitude in defence of his religion, great and important as that heritage was ; and it was the seriousness and conscience and system that really underlay the latest encroachments of the world, which made the religious problem of that age so difficult.

It is not easy to adduce evidence of conscious motive in the great work that Rome did for the world. It can only for the most part be inferred from what was actually done. But there is a striking passage in Seneca (*De Clem.* i) which will help us to see how much the Roman power had to say for itself (or rather how much may be said on its behalf) in the problem and conflict of which we are trying to form an estimate.

The words of course are those of a serious thinker of the time, put rhetorically into the mouth of the prince (Nero) whom it was his task to guide and instruct in the duties of an ideal ruler of the Empire:

It is good to look within and go the round of a clear conscience, and afterwards to cast one's eyes on this great mass of humanity with its conflicts, its plots, its weakness, its certain fate of bringing ruin to itself and others if it should ever break our yoke and rise in revolt. One would say to oneself: 'I of all men have found favour and been chosen out to be vice-gerent of the gods on earth, I have the decision of life and death for the world . . . which peoples should be utterly rooted out, and which transplanted, which receive independence, which be deprived of it, what kings should become slaves and whose head should be graced with a crown, what cities are to fall and which rise, depends on my judgement. But with all this unlimited control of affairs, I have not been forced into unjust reprisal by anger or youthful haste, nay! not even by others' foolhardiness and obstinacy, which many a time has made the calmest temperaments lose patience. . . . Who of them, though there be no other reason, has not a place in my favour on the score that he is a man? . . . This very day should the immortal gods demand from me a reckoning, I am ready to account to them for the whole race of men.'[1]

[1] 'Iuvat inspicere et circuire bonam conscientiam, tum immittere oculos in hanc immensam multitudinem, discordem, seditiosam, impotentem, in perniciem alienam suamque pariter exsultaturam si hoc iugum fregerit, et ita loqui secum: Ego ex omnibus mortalibus placui, electusque sum qui in terris deorum vice fungerer, ego vitae necisque gentibus arbiter; . . . quas nationes funditus exscindi, quas transportari, quibus libertatem dari, quibus eripi, quos reges mancipia fieri, quorumque capiti regium circumdari decus oporteat, quae ruant urbes, quae oriantur, mea iurisdictio est. In hac tanta facultate rerum non ira me ad iniqua supplicia compulit, non iuvenilis impetus, non temeritas hominum et contumacia, quae saepe tranquillissimis pectoribus quoque patientiam extorsit . . . . Nemo non, cui alia desint, hominis nomine apud me gratiosus est. . . .

In this passage, bombastic as it is, we have the ideas that transform empire from mere ambition and brute force to a moral factor which counts both in history itself and in our judgements thereon. There are the ideas of government for the sake of the governed as well as for considerations of police—of a single plan of administration for the good of the whole, in which one part must not be privileged at the expense of another, though all may claim the human right of justice whatever the provocation has been—and, above all, the idea of the governor's vocation, and his responsibility for all who have been committed to his care.

It was an Empire potentially animated by this good-will to the human race, and undoubtedly already *acting* to a great extent on such principles (for the ideal expressed by the Roman moralist could hardly have been conceived without suggestion from the sort of work being done before his eyes)—it was this Empire that was fast marching on to conflict with the national life of the Jews, which itself held a treasure of equal importance for the happiness of humanity. Difficulty was bound to arise between the two, from the very superiority of Roman government to anything that had gone before it in world-politics. The larger and more complicated the machine, the more important is it that all the parts should work in strict subordination to the whole and harmony with one another; and, while the earlier suzerains of the Jews were content with a working compromise between their own political interests and the claims of Jewish nationality, the

Hodie diis immortalibus, si a me rationem repetant, annumerare genus humanum paratus sum.'

For similar ideals expressed at a later date see the poem of Claudian quoted in Gwatkin, *Early Church History*, vol. i, pp. 52 f.

Roman emperors had before them the far greater task of welding the multitude of races into a self-contained unity of government and intercourse. Anything like national cohesion and exclusiveness in a race so numerous, so active, and so widely diffused as Israel, was sure to arouse the suspicion of Roman administrators. And accordingly Judaism had to encounter a growing dislike and contempt in the mind of the orthodox imperialist. Already Cicero (*Pro Flacco* 28) scents in the payment of Temple-dues by the Dispersion a tendency to secular independence; Tacitus well voices the Roman abhorrence of proselytism, and the reason for that abhorrence, when he complains rhetorically (*Hist.* v. 5) that 'all the worst characters were abandoning their ancestral cults to pour tribute and alms into Jerusalem, with the result of swelling a Jewish exchequer'; and in the same passage he puts his finger on the fundamental incompatibility of Judaism, as it was, with the equitable aims of the Empire when he mentions its *adversus omnes alios hostile odium*.[1]

Could there be any reconciliation between these opposing forces, each with its important element of good? Was there any possibility of averting a disastrous catastrophe, in which the religious future of the world, as well as the anti-social clog to civilized government, would be surely sacrificed? There are some indications that the great Caesar half divined the importance of the Jewish nationality, and sought to ally it in friendly co-operation with his scheme of cosmopolitanism.[2] Of this policy and its ultimate

[1] Cf. the striking parallel in St. Paul's phraseology, 1 Thess. ii. 15.

[2] See the terms of the various decrees (given in Jos. *Ant.* xiv. 10) awarding special privileges in the provinces. 'Caesar recognized the Jews as one of the three divisions of people' (Headlam, in Hastings's

failure we shall have to speak when dealing with the 'Herodian' solution of the problem. But, broadly speaking, the antagonism was clear cut, and the problem crucial. To avert war *à outrance* the only remedy would be for the Jews to rise at once to an understanding of their true vocation, the vocation of showing mercy (ἔλεος) to the world that was pressing in all round them, of giving freely their knowledge of God for the benefit of humanity rather than sullenly insisting on religious privileges as an exclusive possession.[1] If they could do that, they would be able to enter into the ethical and humane designs of the world-power, while the Romans on their side would have a chance of understanding the true nature and value for their own purposes of the religion which at present took such a repellent form. Failing a *rapprochement* of this kind (and, humanly speaking, it seemed almost impossible as things were)—if, as seemed certain and in fact happened, Judaism as a national religion (in any sense worthy of the name)[2] were to go under before the armed might of Rome, the only hope for the world was that the spiritual truths entrusted to the stubborn race should be in some way disentangled from their national framework, so as not to share in the overthrow or at least enervation of the national life, but rather to survive with independent

Dict. Bib., s.v. 'Herod'). The Jews exceeded all other provincials in their lamentation at Caesar's death (Suet. *Caes.* 84).

[1] A belated and partial acknowledgement of this national function by a Rabbi of the non-apocalyptic school is quoted by Dr. Burkitt (*Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, p. 8 *n.*): 'We have yet one propitiation equal to [that one which was rendered impossible by the destruction of the Temple]—the bestowal of kindnesses', citing Hos. vi. 6.

[2] After the fall of Jerusalem, the Jews only exercised their religion on condition of paying tax to a heathen temple at Rome

vigour and a better prospect of impressing themselves on the new order of the world.[1]

These successive possibilities of escape from the dilemma constitute together the political setting and explanation of Christ's earthly Ministry which we desire to set forth. If the Jewish nation had responded as a whole to His first appeal and teaching, there can be no doubt that, with all else that repentance involved, there would have been a profound modification of its actual attitude towards the rest of the world, and that the Roman power itself would not have had the excuse it actually had for being blind to the value of the Jewish faith. In such a conversion, could it have been realized, lay at least the seeds of a peaceful settlement. But when that solution was frustrated by human pride and wilfulness, there still remained the mightier expedient, which triumphed in that crisis and is triumphing still —the expedient by which a renovated faith and new loyalty burst the swathing-bands of merely national religion and went forth to supply the spiritual needs of every race and age long after the Judaic ideal was a thing of the past. By the death upon the cross, if he considered it calmly, any reasonable Jew might feel himself freed from the obligation of maintaining that God's promises were confined to the one people : the divine side of the bargain had been fulfilled in Jesus to the letter, and the official leaders would have none of it ; henceforth the national account with God was closed, and the claim of a divine sanction for their idea of racial theocracy was a sham.[2] On the other

[1] ' The first catastrophe . . . escaped ' by Christianity ' was that of being involved in the ruin of political Judaism.' Burkitt, in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 206.

[2] See the argument of the Epistle to the Romans. E. g. ii. 11–16,

hand the Roman Empire in the crucified Christ and His followers now had presented to it (when it should care to look) a religious force quite distinct from the stubborn exclusiveness with which men had naturally associated the claim to know the True God, and the distinction was marked from the first by the fact that it was this same odious exclusiveness that had done Jesus to death—so that religion now stood out in a new character, ranged on the side of humanity, and voluntarily forsaken by the enemies of society who had so prejudiced it in the eyes of the world.

To show that the Gospel story fits aptly into this framework of historical circumstance must be the task of the following chapters. But before leaving the general view of the politico-religious crisis of Christ's time, there may be indicated two gains which seem to accrue to the reverent seeker after truth from carrying some such conception of a world-problem to his study of the Gospels. One is a gain to the credibility, the other to the moral significance of the story there presented to him.

1. If we do not think of the whole fate of religion as in some way at stake at that moment, is it easy for us to accept the Evangelists' presentation of Christ's ministry as a unique revelation of God to men? His teaching in itself, if we do not look for any illustration from circumstances, is after all little more than the renewal of the old prophetic movements. If, in interpreting the Gospels, our purview is not to extend beyond the ordinary religious horizon of the Jew—if there were no special need of the world traceable at

23–4, iv. 16, vii. 4, and especially ix. 6–13, 22–33, x. 3, 4, 19–21 (Israel should have known that the Promise included an extension hurtful to national pride), xi. 11, 28, 32, xv. 8.

that juncture which the true Israelite ought to have seen, we might well be sceptical of the story (implied by the writers) that *God* came to fulfil the aspirations of one little race and to warn it specially of the punishment that comes upon hypocrisy. But a new ability to believe and understand comes when we have reason to remember that the writers and first readers of the Gospels knew well the general craving for true religion at that time, and knew how, though they themselves appreciated to the full the Jewish conception of God taught to them either as Jews or by Christian teachers who based their revelation on the Old Testament, yet the truth had failed so far to make way in the world owing to the stubborn national pride of the Jew. To them, and to us so far as we can enter into their situation, the preaching and death of Jesus Christ was indeed the divine interposition which solves and concludes a tragedy. It was only natural that they should form an implicit, if as yet undeveloped, theory of Christ's Person to explain the appearance of that finest flower of Judaism—the Life which, while it fulfilled in detail the ideal of what the servant of Jehovah should be, was also the effective rebuke they had dimly longed for to the exclusiveness which had seemed the one hopeless barrier to the spiritualizing of the world, though they had not known it could be dissociated from the religion. Here lay a practical proof of divine authority, in the satisfaction by our Lord of the crying need of the time for a Righteous One who should exhibit to the world-power what Judaism really meant and should at the same time be willing to die for the principle that that ideal belonged to the whole of humanity and not to one ittle nation.

2. The moral significance of the Gospel story is also heightened by an outward glance at the historical situation. As long as the record is thought to be of strictly theological interest—recounting how the Son of God came and claimed to be Messiah on the ground of certain marks by which the Jews should have recognized Him, the doubt inevitably arises whether their punishment for refusing to admit the claim was not altogether too severe. But viewed in the light of the crisis as we to the best of our ability conceive it, the judgement on the Jews which is implied in the Gospels becomes the punishment that inevitably follows when men ignore the plain call of circumstances. Here was the world pressing in all round upon the Chosen People in the special home and centre of their nationality. To this world they knew they had a mission, but because the contact was happening in a different way from what their pride had imagined or their selfishness wished, they stubbornly refused to do anything for the alien elements even on their own borders, or to try to understand the good work that the Roman Empire was doing for the nations under its government. Christ was making a far deeper ethical demand than that He Himself should be recognized as the Son of David.[1] He was exhibiting for their imitation that spirit of ἔλεος towards all mankind which their vocation involved, and which, if they had possessed it, would have ensured an instinctive recognition of His authority. But as the demand was deeper than any Messianic claim, so the refusal of it was more serious and more admittedly deserved the great punishment that falls on apostasy.

[1] See Mark xii. 35–7.

For when their blind hatred of mankind made them scout His policy of mercy and ascribe God's good-will to an evil origin, they were doing more than blaspheming the 'Son of Man'—they were committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, which hath never forgiveness.[1]

[1] Matt. xii. 32, Luke xii. 10. It is not suggested that these words had any direct reference outside the immediate occasion of their utterance, but they illustrate the general ethical, as opposed to Messianic, character of Jesus's appeal.

CHAPTER II

THE NATIVE POLICIES OF OUR LORD'S TIME

(*a*) 'Is it not written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peóples"? But ye have made it "a bravos' cave".'—Mark xi. 17.

(*b*) 'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it save the sign of Jonah.'—Matt. xvi. 4.

(*c*) 'It is well that the Jews in all the world under our sway should preserve their ancestral customs without hindrance, while for their part I now charge them to avail themselves of this humane treatment in a reasonable spirit and not to flout the religious beliefs of other nations.'—Edict of the Emperor Claudius when establishing the full Herodian sway for the last time (Jos. *Ant.* xix. 5. 3).

We have now to pass in brief review the various attitudes which might be and were taken by the Jews of that time in face of the crisis outlined in the last chapter. It is the generally prevailing views only that we are concerned with for the moment, expecting to see as we proceed a fundamental divergence from these accepted policies on the part of our Lord and the few followers who had sufficiently entered into the true spirit of Judaism to recognize and obey His call. It is needless to say, further, that in an essay of this length no exhaustive account can be attempted of the Palestinian parties of the day, and therefore much that was good in them must be passed over and the unfavourable colours will perhaps seem unfairly heightened from any more comprehensive point of view. But allowing for this qualification, it may be useful to give in the broadest outline the appearance presented, say,

to a Roman statesman of the time by the different political and religious aspirations which the Jews were expressing. By thus borrowing the eyes of contemporaries to view the main tendencies at work, we may rediscover some political affinities in the new teaching which would have been unmistakable to the first disciples to whom the crisis was present in all its insistence, but which in the Gospel story that they handed down they have assumed rather than recorded.

A. The 'bravos' cave' at Jerusalem

One exception to the apparent silence of our narratives on these points is our Lord's outspoken rebuke, recorded by the Synoptic Gospels, at the time that He cleansed the Temple. Into the chronological question as to the place of this act in the Ministry, and whether there are two such acts or only one, it is beside our purpose to enter.[1] But, whenever it occurred, the 'teaching'[2] that accompanied it seems to involve a further-reaching indictment of Jewish policy than any mere protest against profanation of the Temple. That the purifying act in itself was popular is shown by the fact that it met with no resistance, so that Jesus with His handful of disciples was able in effect to hold the Temple court—'He suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the Temple' (Mark xi. 16). The rulers themselves had no reason to fear a day's ebullition of zeal (causing at most a loss on the part of the traders, who had presumably already paid the rent for their stations) so long as there was no such

[1] See Drummond, *Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 61.

[2] See Mark xi. 17, which seems to imply deliberate indictment rather than a momentary expression of anger.

disturbance as to invoke Roman interference. But when the act of zeal was followed up by general teaching as to the real moral value of what was going on in Jerusalem feast by feast, and as to how the nation used its prized possession of God's Temple—when, further, the whole multitude was visibly impressed by such doctrine—it is not surprising that the authorities, including now the scribes as well as those who were more closely identified with the interests of the Temple, took alarm and 'sought how they might destroy him' (Mark xi. 18).

An examination of Christ's actual words of denunciation and their affinities both in the Old Testament and in contemporary Gentile thought reveals a political significance and a boldness in them from the rulers' point of view which otherwise escapes observation. The idea of trafficking in a sacred place (even if it were exorbitant trafficking, of which we have no evidence) does very little to supply a connotation to the charge of λῃστεία. Some sort of market attached to the Temple was a necessity. But the point was that the proper use of the court of the Gentiles had been forgotten, the market had been admitted *there* without objection: and that fact was significant as being typical of the whole unlovely and self-regarding attitude that the Jewish authorities had taken up towards the rest of the world. A violent 'dog-in-the-manger' policy—the selfishness that has its hand against society—are the ideas that belong historically to the word 'robber' far more than mere thievery; and the daring allusion to Jeremiah's ancient rebuke (Jer. vii. 11) could mean nothing less than that the rulers were still as of old misusing their whole position for selfish secular ends, regarding God's Temple as a permanent preserve for

safeguarding their own interests, and making it therefore more like the remotest fastness of a band of native bravos[1] than the house of prayer which another prophet (Isa. lvi. 7) had dreamed should attract all nations.

And this was exactly how the general attitude of the Jewish rulers struck Roman statesmen and all who could at all sympathize with the Roman ideals of justice and order. Whenever the great priestly families made a bid for independence or acted politically at all it was not security for their religion that they had in view, but the setting-up of what was essentially indistinguishable from the robber-states which elsewhere resisted the Roman sway. Jerusalem for the Jews, power to oppress Galileans and Samaritans, above all the undisturbed enjoyment of the Temple revenues—these were what had come to serve as ideals for the Sadducaic successors of the Maccabees. The Hasmonean kings, as Tacitus cynically points out (*Hist.* v. 8), had distinguished themselves by all the turbulence and blood-stained tyranny of the petty rulers who were so obnoxious to imperial statesmanship; 'they were' only 'fostering superstition, because the office of the priesthood came in as an additional bulwark to their dominion': and the *Assumption of Moses* gives, probably from the pen of a native contemporary (*Ass. Mos.* vii, Charles's ed., pp. 23 ff.), a similarly unfavourable view of the secular and oppressive native policy which obtained even after independence was

[1] The Hebrew word of which λῃστής is the recognized equivalent conveys the idea of 'breaking away' violently from restraint, and is applied in its various forms to any kind of desperate man or beast that outrages the laws of God or the peace of man (see 1 Sam. xxv. 10, Ps. xvii. 4, Isa. xxxv. 8, Dan. xi. 14, Hos. iv. 2).

lost: 'And, in the time of these, scornful and impious men will rule, saying that they are just. And these will conceal the wrath of their minds, being treacherous men, self-pleasers . . . devourers of the goods of the poor, saying that they do so on the ground of their justice (so Charles renders *misericordiam*), but (in reality) to destroy them . . . filled with lawlessness and iniquity . . . saying, "We shall have feastings and luxury, eating and drinking, yea we shall drink our fill, we shall be as princes." '

Nor had this spirit of antagonism to the interests of good government been confined to secret ambition and scheming such as is indicated in the last quotation. Bravos in spirit, the rulers of Jerusalem were not seldom by their sympathies identified with bravos in action. The first appearance of Herod the Great on the public scene was when during his father's lifetime he was summoned before the Sanhedrin to answer for having summarily put down the brigands who were the pest of Galilee. The charge against him was the curiously frivolous one that he had put Jews to death,[1] the whole transaction showing clearly the anarchic and antisocial affinities of Palestinian nationalism.[2] Herod, with all his opportunism during the Roman civil war, was steady in his loyalty to orderly government and the Roman alliance in some shape or form, but we find the Sanhedrin party represented by Antigonus (40 B. C.)

[1] Jos. *Ant.* xiv. 9; G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, vol. ii, p. 470.

[2] It is instructive to compare Josephus's account of the rejoicing of the 'Syrians' thus delivered by Herod from an overflowing scourge, with the picturesque description by a recent Jewish writer of 'those who had opposed Antipater' taking refuge in the highlands of Palestine, and of these 'revolts' being suppressed 'with much cruelty' by Herod. (Jack M Myers, *Story of the Jewish People* (1909), vol. i, p. 32.)

ready to take advantage even of the Parthian invasion, if only so they could hold Palestine for a brief space against the hated Romans. For 100 years from the final establishment of Herod's sway any open alliance with the forces of disorder against Rome was impossible for the official leaders of the nation; they even expressed their own preference for, or at least acquiesced in a Pharisaic agitation in favour of, the change from Herodian government to direct Roman rule, which was finally brought about in A. D. 6.[1] But they only dissociated themselves from popular revolts from motives of fear, and because any premature disturbance would mean that 'the Romans would come and take away their place and nation' (John xi. 48). They were biding their time, 'concealing the wrath of their minds', (*Ass. Mos.* as quoted above). Not that they had any religious objection to Roman sway and civilization. They easily conformed to the changes of life which Italo-Hellenic culture was introducing, much to the scandal of the popular Pharisaic party. But they intended, when opportunity offered, to enjoy these luxuries in independence, and therefore could never enter *ex animo* into the Roman policy of rigorously suppressing all symptoms of nationalist disorder. We may be sure that it was not only hatred of Jesus, but partly a secret sympathy with Barabbas, that actuated them in 'moving the people that Pilate should rather release' (Mark xv. 11) that notable bandit to them. When the time for open revolt arrived, and

[1] See below under the section 'The Messianism of the Pharisees'. That direct Roman rule was regarded at the time as a measure of 'autonomy' to be desired, and in point of fact gave greater dignity and power to the Sanhedrin, will be shown in the Appendix to chap. vi.

the last struggle with Rome began, it is well known how quickly the 'robbers' took command of Jewish affairs. To that element, or (it may be) to the whole policy of the nation symbolized by the predominance of that element,[1] Josephus chiefly ascribes the disastrous end of the struggle; and the writer of the Fourth Gospel, who also lived through the terrible *dénouement* of the sequel, would seem in his narrative to emphasize the ironic significance of the manner in which the Jews made their great refusal of the Messiah: ostensibly they gave Him up to Pilate as a disturber of the Roman peace, but it was really because He was in truth the antithesis of their own cherished ideal of selfish violence, the preference of which sealed their fate—'"Will ye, then, that I shall release for you the King of the Jews?" They cried out therefore again, saying, "Not This One, but Barabbas." And Barabbas was—a bravo!' (John xviii. 39 f.).

Let us sum up this general attitude of the Jerusalem officials as it would strike a contemporary observer who was able to do justice to the Roman position, and as (if our interpretations have been correct) it was condemned by our Lord. It was, in its true inwardness, the Sadducaic abandonment of any religious idea of vocation. The possession of the Temple, and the whole religious heritage of the nation, were an asset not for the winning of the world for Jehovah, not even for the establishment of an independent theocracy, but for the glorification and enrichment of a few ruling families. These had no religious objection, as the Pharisees and the populace had, to Idumaean or Roman sway; but they were determined, so far as they could help it, not to lose their free hand to misgovern and

[1] Τὸ λῃστρικὸν αὐτῶν, Jos. *Bell. Iud.* i. 1. 4.

exploit their compatriots. To the interests of national survival, so interpreted, they were willing to surrender religious vocation, principle, patriotism and everything else. This spirit, though outwardly it seemed to give more promise of a *modus vivendi* with the Empire than the religious bigotry of the Pharisaic party, proved hopelessly antagonistic to the efforts of Rome to work amicably with the native authorities. And if their ingrained factiousness thus blinded them to their true political *interest*, as was shown in the sequel, much more were they impervious to any *religious* appeal which would induce them to look beyond immediate considerations of a material sort and 'flee from the wrath to come', or would effect such a change in their spirit as to avert the coming conflict. Of what use was it to produce God's authority for a demanded reform to men whose judgement of any religious movement was entirely one of expediency? (Mark xi. 27 ff.) The official atmosphere of Jerusalem was fatal to any stirrings of national repentance, for repentance meant the recognition of Israel's duty to the world, and any such duty interfering with their own position of privilege the rulers had long ago repudiated. If the last demand for 'the fruit of the vineyard' came with unique credentials—if they suspected that they were this time face to face with a movement which summed up all the absurd and inconvenient enthusiasm of prophetic religion—the more reason, if they could, to uproot the whole dangerous and impolitic set of ideas at one blow, that they might be free to work out their own aggrandizement without further let or hindrance. 'This is the heir: come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.' Such was the terrible, though logical, issue of an attitude which had long regarded

divine favour as a prize to be grasped at and held for the benefit of the possessor merely, which treated what was meant to be the religious centre of the world as just a fortress for the spoil—in other words the issue of the 'robber' policy, which was as obnoxious to the interests of true religion as it was to those of humane government.

B. The Messianism of the Pharisees

Hitherto we have been examining the contribution of the governing class among the Jews to the critical problem of Roman encroachment, and have tried to imagine the impression which would be made on the Empire by the remembrance of past events and by its present contact with the native rulers. But this official Sadducaic policy, bad as it was and irritating as it was to all that was best in Roman ideals, would never by itself have had enough strength behind it to force on or maintain a conflict with the world-power. A selfish, dynastic opposition the Romans could understand, and with the overwhelming forces at their command, treat with a certain amount of contemptuous friendliness. But there was a growing influence in Jewish politics, coming to a head about the time of Christ's ministry,[1] which proved a real puzzle to them and ultimately the real obstacle to any peaceful solution, just because it had the serious religious element which the official policy lacked. Pharisaism was the very antithesis of the worldly attitude of the great families. It had come to the front as a political force (105–104 B.C.) in protest against the assumption of the royal title by the high-

[1] The greatest predominance of the Pharisees is placed by historians between A.D. 20 and 70. See *Standard Bible Dictionary*, s.v. 'Pharisees'.

priests—for the idea of a petty native king making wars and alliances like any other worldly power was as objectionable (though from a different point of view) to the pious Jew as it was to the Roman. The Pharisee had a keen, if narrow, sense of the national vocation, and was quite sure it ought not to end in the selfish aggrandizement of a native dynasty, especially when that dynasty was all too ready to fall in with the customs of heathen luxury. God's people, according to his view, were called to be a separated holy race, denying itself all the seductions of the world. By its example it was to gather in for the present as many as possible from the heathen world to submit to circumcision and the strict observance of the law ; and, some day, not by any secular force or alliance, but by the interposition of the Faithful One, the Coming Age would be established in the defeat of the heathen by Messiah and in the supremacy of the saints over the world as a reward for their loyalty. Therefore the Pharisees might acquiesce for a time, with sincerer quietness than the hierarchy could, in the idea of Roman domination, and even in the stricter interpretations of that idea, because their hopes were not limited to worldly probabilities. The first appearance of Rome on the scene—the invasion of Pompey, 63 B.C.—had taken the form of an alliance with the Pharisees' candidate for the high-priesthood, and also a curtailment of the civil powers of that functionary in deference to their express petition. Again, at the death of Herod the Great, we need not doubt that it was the growing Pharisaic influence which was actively responsible for the national protest against the succession of Archelaus and the demand for Imperial government, on the strength of which, after a second complaint (A.D. 6), the emperor

found it expedient to depose that ethnarch and introduce for the first time direct Roman rule over Judaea.[1] Better, in the Pharisees' eyes, protection by a power wholly heathen than the domination of a worldly native kingship or than (still worse) of half-heathen rulers, like the Herods, masquerading as Jewish princes.

But why? Not because it was thought any longer that the theocracy was meant to continue peacefully doing its spiritual work under foreign protection, as it had done for most of the period since the Captivity. It is important, for the proper understanding of the history of the time, to recognize that a new politico-religious theory had grown up among pious Jews since the great triumph of the Maccabean revolt—a theory which Mommsen calls 'ein Fortschritt der Oppositionstheologie'—the range of ideas which may conveniently be called Messianism, or, to remind ourselves of a later parallel, the belief in the necessity of temporal power. According to this new hope, any permanent submission to the foreign yoke, any treatment of the chosen nation on equal terms with the rest of the

[1] These transactions may be alluded to by our Lord in the Parable of the Pounds, and in the judgement about tribute to Caesar, which will be discussed in detail later on. That, of the native parties, the Pharisees were chiefly responsible for the presence of 'the things that were Caesar's' may be inferred both from their general attitude towards Rome and from the arguments of the Jewish embassy in 4 B.C. (Jos. *Ant.* xvii. 11, *B. I.* ii. 6), when much was made of Herod's 'innovations' and transgressions of the Law, and when Varus is said to have recognized that the petition for 'autonomy' represented a general native desire; for we know that the Pharisees were the popular party. It is fair to note, however, that what was asked for on that occasion was incorporation with the Syrian province, not a special governor for Judaea; and when the proposal of a census became known in A.D. 6 we are told that the Jews took it ill and were only induced by the persuasion of the High-priest to acquiesce (*Ant.* xviii. 1. 1).

world by a secular authority, involved apostasy; God would never permit it: if only the nation was faithful to its own side of the bargain in keeping the Law, the Almighty was *bound* sooner or later to intervene and make it stronger than its enemies. The 'powers that were', according to the Pharisaic view, were emphatically not 'of God'; it was only necessary to wait for some crucial encroachment on the religious privileges of the Chosen People, or some spontaneous unmistakable 'sign' on God's part that the moment had arrived, and faithful Israelites would throw themselves into the fray with every right to expect that God would bring them through triumphant. Granted this teaching, openly given, as it was, by the religious leaders, and eagerly drunk in by the masses of the people, it was of small importance that the Pharisees themselves deprecated hasty revolt, and, when the breach came, tried to control and moderate the rebellion, dissociating themselves from the popular Messianism of the Zealots who dated the foundation of their 'school' from the revolt of Judas of Galilee in A. D. 6. As long as this theory was taught by the official religionists, the occurrence of violent revolt was only a matter of time, and, under all the outward appearance of Quietism, the Pharisees, with their invincible hatred of foreigners and their perverted faith in Divine deliverance, must be regarded as the ultimate cause why the reconciliation of the best Jewish and Roman ideals as they stood was impossible.

A word must be said to indicate the connexion between the Pharisaic beliefs as they affected the chances of political reconciliation, and the characteristics of the sect which come more prominently before us in the Gospels—its notorious bigotry,

externalism, and self-righteousness. A rigorous zeal for separation and holiness, an unwavering trust in God's faithfulness to His people through all appearances of failure, might seem at first sight to demand our respect and make us feel that the Fall of Jerusalem was only the triumph of might over right. Indeed, by emphasizing the eschatological aspect of Jesus Christ's teaching at the expense of other aspects, some modern interpreters would make it hard to differentiate our Lord Himself from a highly spiritual, consistent, and Utopian type of Pharisee. The teaching of the 'historical Jesus', according to this view, though it was a condemnation of the formalism of the time, would involve no further antagonism to the ordinary exclusive attitude of the Jews towards Gentiles, nor any hint of a universal mission for His followers. The interpretation maintained in these pages will be that the exclusiveness and 'intransigeant' attitude of the Pharisees to Gentile rights were part and parcel of their externalist view of religion, and that in condemning the latter our Lord necessarily declared for a more sympathetic attitude to the Roman ideals and for the opening of the doors of religious privilege to the Gentiles. The Pharisee based his 'Messianism' on the assumption that strict external obedience to the Law was all that God required, and that thereby he earned a miraculous intervention on behalf of his own ideas; all that remained to do was to put God to the test, when the right moment arrived, and if the Almighty did not respond, the Chosen People at any rate were free from blame. Jesus, as John the Baptist before Him, came preaching the necessity of repentance even on the part of Pharisees, to meet the situation; they were not yet keeping the Law in the spiritual and ethical sense

that God intended, Who 'would have kindness and not sacrifice'; if they had cared for humanity themselves, they would have had no difficulty in adjusting their own religious claims to what was good and hopeful in rough Galileans, hybrid Samaritans, mediating Herods, and governing Romans; but, as it was, they had no case from the religious point of view against the new order of things; and to ask for signs, to expect as of right that they would be miraculously delivered, was to 'tempt God', that is to throw the onus of the situation upon the Almighty, when the fault and remedy was in themselves. Once attack the inadequacy, the 'hypocrisy' of Pharisaic externalism as an interpretation of God's will, and you must attack the inferences of religious exclusiveness and political irreconcilability that they built upon it. That our Lord did the one as well as the other, we shall hope to show in the sequel.

C. The Dream of Compromise with Rome (*The Herods*)

There was a third element in native politics, which had long entered into the calculation of Roman statesmen in their dealings with Jewish affairs. Unlike the selfish ambition of the Sanhedrin and the religious fanaticism of the Pharisees, it was an element consciously friendly to the Empire, and one that gave definite promise of a working agreement between the stubborn nationalism of the Jews and Roman ideals of orderly government. This was the family of the Herods, with its ambitious dream that a semi-native Palestinian kingdom might set its own house in order on the approved methods of Roman government, and then, through a judicious accommodation of national

religious prejudices to the Pagan affinities of the Empire, be recognized as the official head of a world-wide Jewish community, which should co-operate with Roman statesmen in their work of civilization, and which might some day rise on the stepping-stone of this alliance[1] to actual supremacy in the world.

It is necessary somewhat to emphasize the importance of the Herodian episode in Jewish history as offering even in the time of our Lord a favourable possibility of escape from the dilemma which forms the political background of the Gospels. Students of the life of Christ are apt to concentrate any thought they give to Herodian matters on the personal character of Herod Antipas (which is really of small significance), and otherwise to class roughly the Idumaean rule with the purely Roman element in the situation. We forget that two-thirds of Palestine was in domestic affairs still free from Roman interference, that most of the Ministry recorded by the Synoptists was passed in these native tetrarchies, that nearly all the 'publicans' (for example) who figure in the Gospels were agents of Herod and not of Rome,[2] and (most important fact of all) that it was still an open question at that time whether direct Roman rule even in Judaea was to be the last word in the solution of the Jewish problem; for as late as twelve years after the Crucifixion (A. D. 41) the Emperor Claudius reverted to the former policy of the Empire and for a short time established Herod Agrippa I in the same comprehensive position of independent kingship which had been held by Herod the Great. The voluntary philo-Romanism

[1] This is the regular official name for the relations of the Herodian princes with the Caesars.

[2] This is disputed by some scholars; but it is the view (as far as the Customs were concerned) adopted by Schürer (I. ii, pp. 66–8).

of the Herods was in fact still a possible alternative to direct imperial administration; and we must now briefly trace its fortunes, and estimate the chances it afforded of averting disaster from the Chosen People as compared with the native tendencies we have already examined, if we are to obtain a complete view of the existing political possibilities that faced a leader in our Lord's time.

The policy of a Romano-Jewish 'alliance' goes back in its origin to the very first appearance of the Romans in Palestine in 63 B. C. We have seen how the Pharisees were willing to benefit by Pompey's intervention at that time to secure a high-priest (Hyrcanus II) whose character and powers should be more in accordance with their ideal of the theocracy than the Sadducaic priest-kings of previous years. But there was in Hyrcanus's train a politician who took a wider and more practical, if more worldly, view than these sectarian enthusiasts of the advantages that might accrue to the nation from Roman arms. This was Antipater the Idumaean, the founder of the future Herodian dynasty. As the real power behind Hyrcanus, he set himself to prove to the Romans that a vigorous semi-native rule in Palestine (such as he had the ability to establish) might be so useful to them that it was worth their while not only to sanction the independence of that rule but to reconcile the Jews to it by giving exceptional privileges to the race throughout the Roman dominions. After a brief period of alliance with Pompey in the clash of the rival imperators, Antipater finally consummated his bargain with the victorious Julius in 47 B. C., obtaining what has been well called[1] 'the Magna

[1] Muirhead, *The Times of Christ* (Clark's Handbooks for Bible-classes), p. 16—an excellent manual which gives an illuminating account of the Herodian policy.

Charta of Jewish privilege within the last century of their political existence'. In this series of Roman decrees, as given by Josephus (*Ant.* xiv. 10), it is important to notice how Caesar's personal gratitude to Hyrcanus (i.e. to Antipater) is associated with special concessions in regard to the exercise of Jewish customs and religion throughout the Empire. Modern historians have cast about for an explanation of the exceptionally favourable treatment meted out to this religion with its monotheistic and exclusive claims—a treatment quite contrary to usual Roman policy; and Canon Hobhouse,[1] recently dealing with the subject, suggests two considerations of expediency which may have influenced the course which Julius Caesar thus inaugurated—that Judaism was too large an element to suppress easily, but not large enough to be a serious menace to the unity of the Empire. May not the chief motive have been a 'rule of thumb' more simple even than these, viz. that, when a Jewish princedom had proved itself and might still prove itself exceptionally useful in the East, it was worth while stretching a point in return to gratify this strange religious sentiment—national and yet not local—at any rate till it should be shown by events to be incompatible with imperial interests? This is the account of the matter suggested by Josephus, who is evidence that from the native point of view at least (and it is the native standpoint with which we are now concerned) the Roman concessions were of the nature of an alliance on equal terms, entered upon in consideration of 'our courage and fidelity' so conspicuously instanced by the new policy of Antipater.

The career of Herod the Great, the son of Antipater,

[1] *The Church and the World*, Bampton Lectures (1910), p. 46.

brings into full light the possibilities and implications of this momentous departure in Jewish aspirations. During his long reign the usefulness to the Romans of an Herodian kingdom was amply shown. Palestine with its mixed population was under a firm and equitable sway which could hardly have been bettered by direct Roman administration, while in the best period of his rule he contrived to conciliate purely Jewish sentiment to an extent which would not at that time have been thought possible under Roman government, and indeed proved impossible when the experiment was made. Further, his military genius constituted his kingdom an invaluable bulwark against Parthians and the like on the eastern frontier of the Empire. And what of the other side of the bargain? What gains to the Chosen Nation accrued from the policy of confederacy with Rome? The gains continued to be great, and, what is more, were consistently and deliberately sought. For it would be an injustice to regard Herod's policy and the traditional policy of his family as one merely of selfish aggrandizement, such as the Sadducaic rulers followed as far as they dared. Ambitious the Idumaean princes were, but it was with an ambition to rise to the vocation of the Jewish people so far as a 'half-Jew' could understand it—they wanted to lead on the race of their adoption, in a worldly fashion, it may be, and often through unhallowed compromises, but still to the position of supremacy which Judaism taught was its right. Herod justly claimed, when announcing his project of rebuilding the Temple (Jos. *Ant.* xv. 11. 1), that the policy of friendliness with Rome had placed the Jewish religion in a more favourable position in relation to the outside world than it had ever held since the Captivity; and

he evidently wished it to be thought that he recognized herein a divine vocation of himself to the kingship. Tertullian says that he posed as Messiah: certainly he and his successors proselytized, and did something to extend Judaism among the other kings of the East;[1] and when we read of Herod Agrippa I holding a gathering of vassal princes, we cannot suppose that the dream of a Jewish empire was altogether excluded from the purview of the Herods. With the persistent rumours afloat throughout the East of a coming Messiah, with the example before their eyes of the practical division of empire that had obtained while Antony was at the height of his power, it would have been strange if some such hope had not crossed their minds. A recent historian of the Church[2] has done well to remind us that 'the Jews were the greatest people of the East, and no unequal match for Rome herself. . . . The Law, the Temple, and the Messianic hope kept Israel a living nation—the only living nation left inside the Empire'; and if the small part of the whole which was confined to the limits of Palestine maintained a seventy-years 'struggle with Rome for the dominion of the East', and that with the disadvantage of the mad guidance of Zealot irreconcilables, what might not have been done to obtain a commanding position for the race by the peaceful and mediating policy of the Herods, who for gaining the respect of Rome relied on the moral support of a contented and numerous Dispersion rather than on a rebellious minority which was bound to be conquered in the end? Well might a Palestinian Jew of

[1] Milman, *History of the Jews*, vol. ii, p. 83; Headlam, in Hastings's *D. B.*, s.v. 'Herod'.

[2] Gwatkin, *Early Church History*, vol. i, p. 49.

our Lord's time, who could read events, conclude that a hearty support of the Herods offered not only the sole chance of avoiding a Roman conquest,[1] but also the likeliest avenue through which Israel could hope to attain to 'the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them'.

Such were the favourable possibilities of the Herodian solution of the problem, most apparent in the reign of Herod the Great, but still open in a less degree in the time of our Lord. But already before the death of the first Herod there were ominous signs that the friendship with Rome on equal terms was not so easy an escape from a threatening situation as at first it promised to be, and that the optimistic 'toleration' of Judaism inaugurated by Julius Caesar might prove to be neither what Rome could expediently give nor what Israel could conscientiously accept. In the remainder of this chapter we must touch on the difficulties, from the point of view of the Empire and from the point of view of the Jew, which ultimately made this attempted reconciliation impossible, and which (humanly speaking) left the extinction of the national life of the Jews the only course.

1. The whole policy of Roman Imperialism was fast moving away from the idea of 'special treatment' either politically or in the matter of religion. When the main object was unity of administration and uniformity of social life and culture, political and religious exceptions—however expedient for the moment, however negligible from the standpoint of Pagan philosophy they might seem to be—were bound

[1] Stephen Phillips, *Herod*, p. 102 :—

'Herod alone defers the Roman doom,
That general fate whereto the world is born.'

to disappear as the Empire developed its system. Petty kingdoms, such as Herod's, were traditionally abhorrent to Roman ideas, and we are not surprised to hear that Augustus was revolted by the stories of Oriental tyranny and bloodshed that reached him from the Jewish palace. His sentiments towards that monarch palpably cooled towards the end, and after Herod's death he soon yielded to the insistent demands of the native malcontents so far as to curtail the Herodian jurisdiction considerably, though the disorder that had prevailed in Palestine in 4 B.C. while the question of government was in the balance must have shown him what useful instruments the Idumaean princes really were. Again, on the other hand, it was never intended that the granting of religious privileges which had accompanied the 'alliance' with the Herods should develop in sincere Judaism and proselytism on their part, such as would tend to foster the racial exclusiveness of the Jews. The Romans were quite prepared even to suppress a religion, if so they could remove a hindrance to the spread of uniform culture;[1] and they certainly had no mind to give positive encouragement to any national worship, especially when, as in the case of Judaism, it put forth a universal claim. The true limits of Roman recognition of national privileges are expressed in the third quotation at the head of this chapter:[2] when Claudius for the last time tries the solution of native kingship combined with toleration of 'ancestral customs', he is careful to impress on the

[1] The allusion is to the suppression of Druidism begun by Tiberius, which resulted in the rapid Romanization of Celtic Gaul; see Workman, *Persecution in the Early Church* (p. 78), to which I am indebted for some part of the explanation of Roman 'toleration' adopted in these few pages.

[2] See p. 19.

Jews that there must be no hope of anything but the principle of 'live and let live', no militant religion to endanger the comprehensive ideal of the imperial system. And it was just the excessively national sympathies of the kingdom then set up that doomed the experiment finally in the eyes of Rome after a very few years. This Herod Agrippa seems to have been the sincerest of his family in giving due prominence to the true native side of the Romano-Herodian bargain; he was always anxious to do what was 'pleasing to the Jews' (Acts xii. 3) and to guard the religious interests of his nation in an understanding spirit. The immediate abandonment of this method of government after his death seems to prove that the Empire had no idea now of an alliance on equal terms, and no mind to permit the fostering of national sentiment as the price of temporary peace.[1]

2. On the native side there were equal or greater difficulties in the way of enthusiasm for the Herodian 'alliance'. There was the initial difficulty of the foreign blood of the inventors and exponents of the policy. Till Herod Agrippa I the Pharisees could never pretend to forget the Edomite strain in the family, and we have seen how the Sanhedrin was willing to bring direct Roman government upon Judaea rather than endure Archelaus, who was both Edomite and Samaritan. This was a fatal fruit of racial hatred—to bring in complete foreigners in preference to rulers who could at least understand Jewish susceptibilities. Racial jealousy in another way was a reason, and a bad reason, why the Herodian solution could not command Jewish support: it was galling to see the mixed and

[1] See Jos. *Ant.* xix. 6, 7, for Agrippa's attitude and for the suspicions he aroused in the mind of the Syrian pro-praetor.

alien populations of the Holy Land treated fairly and on equal terms with pure Israelites—an aspect which was of the very essence of the Herods' work ;[1] just as it was galling to the native magnates to see robbers of irreproachable descent treated like common criminals. These, then, were conscientious obstacles of a spurious sort, which were no valid condemnation of the mediating policy, and which we shall see were conspicuously contravened by Christ. But there were truer and more respectable objections to this dream of a Roman alliance being entertained by any good Jew, objections which lay in its religious implications. The Herods might build a Temple and synagogues for the national religion at home and abroad, but they had also to build heathen shrines for the gods of their heathen subjects. And for a king of the Jews to do this was faithlessness to the vocation of the Chosen People. Here we touch the fundamental impossibility of any ultimate compromise between the Empire and the Jews, as things stood. Wrong-headed as the nation was and blind to the good side of the incoming forces—much as the Roman attitude to Judaism might have been modified if more reasonable counsels had prevailed —it was a true instinct which regarded the means by which the Herods purchased 'toleration' as nothing less than apostasy. The imperial demand as it stood was essentially that Judaism should seek recognition as one religion among many others under the authority of the State ; and 'this last was the very thing that for Christianity, *as for Judaism before it*, was an

[1] See the complaint of the Jewish embassy to Rome in 4 B.C., that Herod had 'shed the blood of Judaea to do favour to the alien peoples' (Jos. *B.I.* ii. 6. 2), and had adorned foreign cities at the expense of 'his own'.

impossibility'.[1] But this was the implied policy on which the Herods freely acted; and the only logical issue of it, if a universal religion was felt to be necessary for the Empire, was Caesar-worship, the ritual recognition of this power that gave laws to all religions alike. It is true that Caesar-worship was never actually forced on the Jews: the destruction of Jerusalem and the registration tax paid thenceforth to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus came in time to establish the principle sufficiently as far as they were concerned; but the Herods had already betrayed the ultimate meaning of their compromise by the voluntary and frequent erection of temples to Rome and Augustus in their heathen dominions. So it was that a faithful Jew in the time of Christ, far as he might go in admiration of the Herodian governments and of the possibilities they symbolized of Jewish triumph in the world, would soon be brought up against this compromise of religious truth, which made triumph on these terms unthinkable; for to be an adherent of that policy was essentially the same 'worship of Satan' against which in a more insistent form the Christians later had to wage a life and death struggle.

[1] Workman, op. cit., p. 76.

CHAPTER III

THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD AS A PREPARATION FOR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

'To-day if ye would hear His voice:—
"Harden not your heart, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness."'—Ps. xcv. 8.

'But first I mean
To exercise him in the wilderness;
There he shall first lay down the rudiments
Of his great warfare.'
MILTON, *Par. Reg.* i. 155–8.

THE facts that we have so far adduced as to the political circumstances of our Lord's time are for the most part admitted and familiar. There will not be any serious question that the crisis in the religious history of the world described in Chapter I really existed; or that the political relations of high priests, Pharisees, and Herods to Rome had a momentous bearing on that crisis, in so far as they should prove to offer or not to offer any possible *modus vivendi* between the religion of Israel and the governmental aims of the Empire. We easily recognize in the fall of Jerusalem an answer to this question in the negative, and the death-blow to false Jewish estimates of the place of the Kingdom of God in the world.[1] The relations of Church and State were not to be such as the various native parties

[1] 'Jerusalem was taken. . . . If Judaism still lived on, it was because, like Christianity, it renounced its claim to be a rival of the secular power.' Burkitt, in *Camb. Bibl. Essays*, p. 206.

had conceived them—the people of God was not to be a selfish petty kingdom standing outside and ignoring the interests of other nations (as the Sadducee would have had it); nor was it to dominate the rest of the world for its supposed good, placed by miraculous intervention in a position to enforce God's will among the heathen (as the Pharisee hoped); nor, on the other hand, was it permitted to sell its spiritual birthright, while still a free agent, to the world, and accept the licence of the secular power to settle down on friendly terms with paganism—the policy of the Herods. And we see that Christianity, as a matter of fact, adopted an attitude to the secular interests of mankind which avoided these errors and enabled it to succeed where Judaism failed: as against the Sadducees it held that the knowledge of God was to be for the benefit of the whole world: as against Messianism it recognized the good already existing in the world and the Divine commission and rights of the secular power; while its most characteristic triumph was won over the whole idea of Caesar-worship, which we have seen to be the ultimate embodiment of the false Herodian dream of compromise.

So far, then, it is admitted that the Christian Church has in history a kind of political affinity, inasmuch as it is found taking up a definite attitude to the great political organization of the day—an attitude markedly different from that of all Jewish politicians, and one that was a necessary element in any understanding that was to come about between true religion and the Empire. But may we go further back than that, and contend that this affinity was conscious from the first—that the same position as to the relations between religion and the State is traceable in the earthly life

and teaching of Jesus Christ? Are we warranted by such evidence as we have in saying that He Himself faced the political situation as it affected the religious future of humanity, and indicated, for those who were willing to see, what was the right and what was the wrong national attitude for His people to take up in face of that crisis? Or, are we to say that His Ministry took no account of such questions—that so far as He took cognizance of men's political ideals, it was only to treat them as of no importance, not to correct them? seeing that (according to prevailing interpretations at the present day) He came to announce a transcendent kingdom, which, if its adherents ultimately formed a working theory of political relationship in the world, at any rate in the mind of its Founder was the negation of all such earthly relationships. This is the disputed ground of our theme, and it lies with us in the rest of this essay to offer proof that political affinities and repulsions are a real thread running through the story of our Lord's earthly life. Again let me guard the position against misunderstanding. The purpose is not of course to narrow down the import of the Gospel to national and political implications alone, nor to deny the transcendence of Christ's revelation over all earthly and merely contemporary needs; but rather to maintain, what indeed a full belief in the Incarnation would lead us to expect, that God's scheme of redemption necessarily involved *in Jesus* an appeal to the political forces at work on the situation as well as to other forces, and that the former perhaps constituted at that time 'God's opportunity' in a special degree, seeing that 'man's necessity' also, as far as modern historians can judge it, was the peril arising to religion from a blind nationalism

on the one hand and an overweening, unspiritual, imperialism on the other.[1]

Before examining the actual course and details of Christ's Ministry for indications of such an attitude towards contemporary policies, I wish to suggest that important testimony to this aspect of His work lies ready to our hand in one document, or part of a document, which purports to reveal for the benefit of Christian disciples the ground principles of their Master's witness in the world. I refer to the detailed account of the Temptation, incorporated with slight differences in the First and Third Gospels. Whatever view is taken of this narrative, whether it be ultimately from the lips of Jesus Himself, or (to go to the extreme of scepticism) the interpretation by the Early Church of a spiritual conflict stated to have been endured by the Master though the content of the conflict was not known—its place in the two Gospels shows it to have been regarded as an apt introduction to the story of His Ministry, a forecast of fundamental conditions which would be found to guide and limit the activity of the Redeemer in the events they were about to record. Further, it must be remembered (though this is not the place to venture on the difficult subject of Gospel criticism) that the tendency of modern investigation is to assign an early date to the sources which are common to St. Matthew and St. Luke, so that any evidence of Christ's outlook that can be adduced from this narrative is likely to be at least as original as the traces of eschatological limitations, on which so much

[1] There is also the consideration, too wide in its scope for discussion here, whether the friendly attitude to the world-power in St. Paul and (more wonderful) in First Peter could have been developed and not been discernible also in the Ministry of Jesus.

stress is laid at the present time. If then in a nearly (if not quite) contemporary document, coming to us with early secondary, if not quite primary, authority, we have a formal statement of inner purpose in the Ministry couched in phraseology reminiscent of national traditions, and employing symbolism which may almost be said to 'cartoon' the political hopes of the day, so apt to them it may be shown to be, this is evidence of the view of at least some early disciple attributing a political meaning to the vocation of Jesus.

It need hardly be said that to find allusions in the Temptation to the national situation at the time would not affect the deeper moral and Christological significance which the incident must have for every age. All that we are here concerned with is the historical elucidation of the narrative—would or would not its terminology suggest to the mind of a contemporary Jew that alike in the proposals of the Tempter and in the rejoinders of the Tempted One it was action on the national stage that was primarily contemplated?

1. The first point to be noticed is in how striking a way the story claims to be a re-enactment in Christ's person of a discipline once imposed upon the whole nation. The parallel has been observed by some commentators, but not, I venture to think, sufficiently emphasized as a key to interpretation. Jesus, lately singled out by the Divine vocation as 'Son of God', is represented as undergoing a preliminary testing in the wilderness similar to the wanderings in the desert, before He enters upon His task of witness. St. Matthew's Gospel has elsewhere applied words originally spoken of the nation to illustrate what befell Jesus in His earthly life, regarding the Child's

return from Egypt as a re-fulfilment of Israel's first call to be a people (Matt. ii. 15); but in the Temptation narrative it is not an illustrative comparison merely that meets us, but a similarity of incident and thought that is bound up with the whole story. According to the true text of St. Luke (iv. 1) Jesus is even 'led about by the Spirit *in* the wilderness', not merely driven or led *into* it (as St. Matthew and St. Mark); and therein the very phrase of Deuteronomy is used which describes the wanderings of the Children of Israel, 'the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness' (Deut. viii. 2).[1] And as the surroundings of the two preparations are similar, so there are the detailed parallels of the number 'forty', of the object of the sojourning, and of the ultimate Designer of the testing process. (Compare St. Matthew's phraseology, 'led up into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted . . .' with Deut. viii. 2, 'And thou shalt remember all the way that the Lord thy God hath led thee . . . in the wilderness, that he might humble thee, to prove (or tempt, πειράσῃ, LXX) thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no.') Add to this the discipline of hunger, from which the first temptation is made to arise; not only is this expressly mentioned in the same passage of Deuteronomy as part of the testing experience laid upon the Children of Israel at that time, but, together with the giving of the manna, it is the means whereby they were taught the very truth ('that man doth not live by bread alone') which our Lord quotes to rebut that particular temptation. The source of the three crucial quotations, indeed—all from Moses' farewell exposition of the Covenant at

[1] See Chase, *Confirmation in the Apostolic Age*, p. 15 n.

the entrance of the Promised Land—should remove any lingering doubt as to the narrator's view that Jesus went through an experience parallel to that of the national wanderings in the desert, and was Himself conscious that this was intended.[1]

We shall have to examine carefully the import of some of these words when we come to ask what each temptation was likely to have meant to a Jew of our Lord's time; but for the moment let us face the general question of these striking allusions to national history and appeals to what may especially be called the national lesson-book of the Jews, interwoven with a story which purports to set forth historically the ground principles and divinely-imposed limitations of Christ's approaching Ministry. Do not such references imply an atmosphere in which the prospect of national action and national deliverance is still the main interest? We seem to be hearing, not so much of a unique test applied to the 'Son of God' in preparation for merely personal activity, as of a renewal of opportunity for all Israel accorded to Him as their representative. The general lessons applicable to a whole people, but which they had hitherto failed to learn, have been at last fully grasped and are firmly held by One true Son of Israel, and therefore under His auspices the nation may once more go forward to fulfil its vocation in the world.

Against this it will probably be urged that the fulfilment of Old Testament types in Jesus Christ is

[1] The historical appropriateness of the citations to the renewal of a national discipline would seem effectually to bind the narrative into one whole, and forbid us to take the reminiscence of Israel's wanderings as the accidental illustration from national history of a wholly personal matter. Indeed, to a Jew the import of these great maxims would always be as much national as personal.

a commonplace of the New Testament, and that no argument can be drawn from the historical parallelism here for the connexion of the Ministry with ordinary national hopes—rather that the fortunes of the race were reproduced in the history of our Lord, just because they were totally *merged* in Him and because the old methods of probation were superseded by the new scheme of redemption—that henceforth the prospects of the Kingdom of God turned in truth on the individual faithfulness of Messiah. If the Temptation narrative came to us with the authority of St. Matthew's Gospel only, no answer, I think, could be made to this objection, and we might justly class the setting of this story with the rest of the interpretation of Christ's life as the final fulfilment of Messianic hopes, and admit that a unique mystical experience is alluded to, peculiar to our Lord, and having no reference to any temptation which might be supposed to affect an ordinary national leader at that day. But the presence of the same narrative in the Third Gospel puts it at least in the category of original tradition rather than of apologetic presentation ; and, as far as we desire to maintain that it closely represents either the actual experience of Jesus or the form in which He might have imparted it to others at the time, so far we must insist on taking the historical parallelism in the natural sense ; for the introduction of Messianic types into a story, if the fulfilment was not in the event itself and such as contemporary observers could understand, belongs to the region of afterthought ; so that this line of interpretation would force us to date the narrative later than the Resurrection and would pen the door to serious doubts of its claim to credence.

2. A political interpretation of the Temptation has

the advantage of harmonizing in yet another way with our legitimate desire to accept the story as part of the first Gospel-tradition unless compelled by evidence to think otherwise. It provides a reasonable explanation for such a disclosure to *the disciples*, particularly at the earlier stage of their discipleship; whereas a merely personal revelation in terms of national ideas would have been meaningless then, and positively inconsistent with Christ's purpose during the latter half of His Ministry. Let us consider the matter from the point of view of the disciples' need of training. It may be doubted whether at any time it would have been useful to them to know the principles that guided and restrained the employment of unique Messianic powers, except so far as those principles were also applicable to the normal action of the nation or the Church. But certainly such teaching veiled in language which suggests that the Chosen People is being accorded another opportunity under the leadership of Jesus, would have missed its mark, so long as national success completely filled the horizon of their hopes, and at a time when the idea of a Messiah with spiritual interests of his own apart from the nation would have been unmeaning to them; while this form of narrative would have been equally unlikely to come from the lips of the Master at the later time when all His effort was to inure them to the disappointment of secular ideas. On the other hand, at the earlier stage of their discipleship we can conceive great use in reminding them that the national privileges were of old time conditional on the nation's willingness to learn God's lessons, and in telling them that their Master too in a hard conflict had been tested in His grasp of the same restrictive principles, so that the Kingdom of God which He had come to restore, as

they still thought, in the old political sense, would assuredly conform to those elementary laws and would not exist on any other terms. This would be a good preliminary *preparation* for them to understand, as events developed, why it was that Christ did not bid for support which He might have had from existing modes of thought, and why the breach with the past became apparently ever wider.

3. The last general indication we shall refer to of a primary political meaning in the Temptation is the use of the title 'Son of God'. It is not necessary to remind the reader how the narrative turns upon this phrase, echoed from the account of the Lord's Baptism immediately preceding. The two first temptations have their whole logical basis in this designation; Jesus is challenged to establish His claim to the position assigned Him, to prove its reality by acting in certain ways. The contemporary ideas that would be associated with such a title have the first claim to guide our interpretation, so long as the view is open to us that this narrative represents information given at an early period to the disciples for their immediate edification. It is true that Dalman [1] and other critics regard the designation of Jesus as 'Son of God' both at the Baptism and in the Temptation as the interpretation of a later period, when the full Christian view of His Sonship had been established; but it is difficult to see, considering the Messianic use of 'My Son' in Psalm ii. 7 [2] and the application of the term 'beloved' to Israel in Isa. xlii. 1 (compare also Exod.

[1] *The Words of Jesus*, pp. 268–89.

[2] A 'Western' reading of Luke iii. 22 made this reference definite by substituting 'This day have I begotten Thee' for '. . . the Beloved, in Thee I am well pleased'.

iv. 22), why the most rudimentary and nationalistic grade of vocation should not have been borne into the consciousness of Jesus in that form. What further content the form might have had for Him, what fullness of underlying meaning the address 'Thou art my Son' would convey to the heart of the Hearer, it is beside our purpose to inquire, though we may be confident that with His close personal relation to the Father it would suggest something far deeper than to any contemporary. But the point we desire to emphasize is that for those whom He taught, and, it may be, prima facie for Himself as working out a revelation stage by stage of God's will, the title could not yet be divorced from its primary associations with the sonship of all Israel and that of the Messianic King regarded as a national leader. It is perilous to speculate, where our knowledge is so little, as to steps in the determination of methods for Christ's Ministry: but, without touching further on the dogmatic problem of His 'kenôsis', we may at least say that the contact with the essentially national appeal of the Baptist's mission—a contact culminating in a vocation couched in national phraseology—might have been the occasion of a preliminary spiritual probing and conflict in the mind of Jesus as to the true meaning of Israel's privileged position and of His own position as Heir to the national promises, before ever the question of His use of personal Messianic powers arose. And to this interpretation of 'Son of God' we are the more impelled, if we believe the narrative of the Temptation to be a contemporary record representing part of the early training of the disciples in first principles.

A small additional confirmation of our view may be found in the absence of the premiss 'If thou art the

Son of God' from the third Satanic suggestion (placed second in St. Luke's account). The common reference of the narrative to the use of miraculous power must in any case break down at this point, for 'doing evil that good may come' or 'a secular kingship' has no special connexion with extraordinary powers as the other two temptations on the face of them might appear to have. But even giving the widest sense to the unique personal supremacy of our Lord which to most interpreters is the whole cause and subject of the temptations, what plausible reason can they allege for the omission of the logical premiss of the seduction in this case? As 'Son of God' in the sense of 'superior to human restrictions' He might be, even specially, allured to spiritual revolt and independence of the Covenant-God by the promise of supreme power over the world. It would be just the pre-eminence, the isolation of His unique Being, which would suggest the possibility of the sinister bargain. But, interpreting 'Son of God' as 'Heir to the national vocation and Representative of a People whose mark it was to worship Jehovah alone', we shall see that this last temptation stands naturally outside the scope of the earlier challenge: there is point in Satan's silence then; for, still with political action in view, he is suggesting that the traditional privileges and exclusive worship should be totally abandoned for the freedom of Gentile methods. The fuller substantiation of this and other details of exegesis must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE NATIVE POLICIES IN THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD

'It was quite possible to break the yoke of Rome, if Jesus of Nazareth had cared to do it. . . . But . . . the badness [of those who actually attempted revolt] was itself the outcome of a deeper evil. A victory over Rome would only have subjected a rotten Gentile world to a rotten Jewish nation. . . . Every sentence, therefore, of our Saviour's teaching looks through the special trials of Israel to the general problem of the sin of the world, and prepares for its removal by one sacrifice for sin made once for all.'—PROF. GWATKIN, *Early Church History*, i, p. 54.

ANY satisfactory exegesis of the Temptation narrative must give due weight to its symbolic character. No one to-day would think of limiting its significance to the literal statements, or require that, even as an acted parable, Jesus must necessarily have been tempted to demand the transformation of stones into bread, or have really taken His stand on the roof of the Temple, or seen all the kingdoms of the world from a high mountain. Such an interpretation would have been as foreign to the Oriental thought of the first hearers as to the historical and scientific sense of the present day. Whether it were a vision actually experienced, or a parable used to convey truth to others,[1] it has obviously a larger symbolic purpose beneath the sur-

[1] Dr. Joyce has exhaustively treated the psychological question as regards prophecy in the first of this series, *The Inspiration of Prophecy*. Dr. Kennett (*Interpreter*, July 1912, vol. viii, No. 4) shows how actual persons and places figure in the apocalyptic parables with no intention that they should be understood literally.

face, namely, to exhibit three dangers bearing fundamentally on the new movement, dangers which, if they were allowed to prevail, would have spoiled that movement in its totality.

But it may be questioned whether in seeking the key to the symbolism we are not still too much bound by the letter, if we insist, as most interpreters do, on a signification merely personal to the Tempted One and to His unique course of ministry as we know it. Because the proposals are represented as addressed to Him alone, we assume that they have to do with His special work, forgetting the readiness of the Hebrew mind to look for general truth in the symbol of individual action or experience (compare the prophetical books *passim*). Thus the most common explanation of at least two of the temptations is to make them refer exclusively to special Messianic powers of which Jesus is assumed to have been conscious: He is urged, we are told, to use His power to work miracles for the satisfaction of His own material necessities, and for the purpose of theatrical display, that He may convince the people of His unique mission. Such an interpretation is, as a matter of fact, at once condemned, if we apply the test of personal probability, to which, one would think, an exclusively personal reference at any rate should conform. If these temptations bear only on Jesus' use of special powers and not on the possible action of a whole nation, the more reason that they should be 'in character' with what we know of Him otherwise and be such as would be likely to affect Him. Yet, granted that there were this formal consciousness of Messianic powers, could such use of them have ever attracted *Him*? A similar objection lies against the usual interpretation of the temptation on the moun-

tain. If in the 'worshipping of Satan' to gain the kingdoms of the world we can find no more subtle and satisfying significance than the crude abandonment of faith in God and the adoption by Jesus of worldly methods to realize His unique vocation, we retain our definiteness of application at the expense of all reverence and probability, for the most imperfect enthusiast might never feel that as a temptation. Uniqueness of temptation after this sort would only seem to reveal Him as above, or below, the moral standards of ordinary humanity.

Thus the moral inadequacy of the semi-literal interpretation which sees nothing more in the narrative than a temptation exclusively personal, together with the indications already mentioned in the last chapter of a national interest implied in the setting, prepares us for the conclusion that the three difficulties here pictured are not so much personal snares lying about the lonely path of the Christ, as the main tendencies of the national life, which might well seem on a preliminary survey to narrow down the choice of action, for people and leader alike, to certain alternatives—alternatives which none the less involved disobedience to the Divine Law, and which the true 'Son of God' must therefore reject. Meditating on the current ideals of the time—of Sadducees, Pharisees, Herodians—and bringing them to the test, especially, of the national lesson-book contained in the Book of Deuteronomy, Jesus would recognize in them the historic national failings there held up for warning—the love of ease, the arrogance towards God, the readiness for apostatizing compromise with the heathen world; and so the existing policies, fair-seeming though they are and apparently the only alternatives, to Him stand self-

condemned as fulfilling but the will of Israel's Adversary[1]—no deliverance will lie by those ways!

And how fitting the time, with its attendant circumstances, to which this momentous decision is traced! Israel—'My first-born Son' (Exod. iv. 22)—immediately after its call had been isolated in the wilderness for a season and tested to see if before entering on its mission it would learn the lesson that it depended on God alone for its survival. So at the new juncture He, in whom is now embodied the future of the Chosen People, is driven away from the haunts of men that He may view safely from the outside the welter of contending parties, and be tested in His grasp of the same eternal principle for the shaping of His public policy (He surely did not need to learn it for Himself!)—that every course must be refused which is not based on implicit loyalty to God.

It remains to justify this connexion of the Temptation with the native policies of the time by an examination of the language and symbolism of our document, taking the order as given in St. Matthew. It must be allowed that the sequence and climax of the testing process as we propose to interpret it is not so visible in St. Luke's version of the narrative. He places what we conceive to be the 'anti-nationalist' suggestion between the two nationalistic ones, and correspondingly omits the ὕπαγε Σατανᾶ, which in our reading of the story marks out this temptation as the most crucial and hardest to rebut. But the testimony of the Gentile evangelist, writing with less knowledge of and interest in native Jewish thought, is less impor-

[1] The part that Satan plays in the narrative may be wholly figurative, on the principle of interpretation evidenced by Dr. Kennett's article quoted *antea*.

tant than that of a compiler (whoever he may have been) who was certainly familiar with the national outlook, and would have a keen eye for the exact significance of a tradition which seemed to reveal the Lord's inmost thoughts as to His Messianic Kingship, and the reasons for the ultimate failure of all the native solutions of the crisis.

A. The Irreligion of the Jerusalem Leaders (*Indifference to God's Promises*)

Acute hunger attributes overmastering value to the need of mere survival. This physical state, mingling with meditation on the apparent prospects of the Chosen People, might well foster in a leader's mind a vein of political cynicism. It is too puerile an explanation of 'Speak that these stones become loaves' to suppose that our Lord was actually tempted to ask for Divine intervention to put an end to what, as regards material compulsion, was after all only a voluntary fast. Nor, as we have seen, can we deliberately rest in the view that this indicates a real temptation to use Messianic power for purely selfish ends. But why should not the thought have occurred that, to prove and fulfil His vocation to be the representative of the nation, the only course was to fall in with the outlook of the present official leaders, and be content with expecting God first of all to provide for the survival of national independence? Were not the Sadducaic party wisely satisfied with developing the great natural advantages of their situation and biding their time [1] for a chance of enjoying these in independence, without going out of their way to challenge the world

[1] See the quotation from the *Assumption of Moses*, p. 23 *supra*.

by forcing their religion upon others—a course which would only endanger their 'place and nation' (John xi. 48)? But no! this cynical ignoring of the Divine promises is neither a new nor a legitimate course of action. It is an old besetting sin of Israel, against which the ancient training in the wilderness had been expressly directed, and the 'Son of God' must learn afresh to beware of it. It was this very discipline of hunger, combined with the mysterious relief given in manna outside all known natural resources,[1] that should have taught the nation for all time, if they would have learned, that the presence of means of subsistence ('bread') is not the sole cause of man's survival. The solemn promises of God to His People are a necessary factor for a true human life and contribute to its maintenance in the full sense: therefore to make light of God's revealed purposes, to regard Him as concerned only with the material sustenance and mere survival of the nation, is a fatal misconception of Israel's calling and history, that can only end in disaster.

It should be pointed out for the elucidation of this temptation that the phrase 'every word going out through the mouth of God' quoted from Deuteronomy must be interpreted, by analogy with other passages, as referring to Divine promises rather than commands. Thus Num. xxx. 2, 12, 'all that proceedeth out of his (or her) mouth', of a human vow; Ps. lxxxix. 34, 'My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips'; Isa. xlv. 23, 'The word is gone forth from my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear' (a most

[1] See the exact statement of Deut. viii. 3.

significant passage, remembering that it was the *missionary* character of the promises of God to which the rulers were so blind); compare also Jer. xvii. 16, and xliv. 17, for the common use of the phrase, and Dr. Driver's note on Deut. xxiii. 24, 'The expression is used of a solemn declaration or promise.' This detail of exegesis is not unimportant for our purpose, for it confirms the reference of the quoted principle to an existing tendency of national policy rather than to a temptation likely to affect Jesus' personal action. How could *He*, viewing Himself as a solitary Messiah, be in danger of ignoring any of the promises of God? Whereas it was just their total indifference to the spiritual side of the nation's inheritance and to the promise of world-wide influence, which explained all the other unlovely characteristics of the Jerusalem leaders, their rationalism, their heathenish luxury, their political opportunism, and their deceitful attitude towards the Roman power.[1]

B. The Irreligion of Messianism

('*Tempting God*')

To demand of God, then, mere survival and to ignore His promises is no policy for a Chosen People, and Jesus cannot vindicate His claim to be 'Son of God' by acquiescing in so limited an ideal. But was there not another section of the nation, and that a stronger one in moral force than the aristocracy of Jerusalem, that *did* base human life on 'every word going forth through the mouth of God', that did build its hopes pre-eminently on His call and promises of ultimate victory? The Pharisees—Jesus must already have

[1] Cf. pp. 20–27 *supra*.

known them, their zealous piety, their passionate faith that somehow God would yet again 'set *His* king' (no worldly Hasmonean of the Sadducaic genus, but the true Messiah) 'upon His holy hill of Zion'. Here, then, is the rôle appropriate to, even defined by the Scripture itself (Ps. ii) for, one who has been named the Son, the Beloved: He is to fulfil the hopes of the faithful and be the Messiah for whose appearance they are only waiting as the signal for a great national triumph over the world. And so a vision rises before the Solitary's mind: He has come to the 'Holy City', there He has been 'set', He knows not by whom, on the highest platform of the Temple edifice, where Messiah ought to be. For this roof had its place in the pictorial paraphernalia of Jewish hopes; from it, according to at least one representation, the Christ was to proclaim the coming of the light, and on it receive the homage of the Gentiles.[1] But of what course of action is it the starting-point now, in the national situation as it figures itself to His visionary eye, or as (perhaps) He figured it afterwards for the instruction of those to whom He revealed His thoughts? The Messianic status is beneath His feet—He can have it for the asking: but what after? What is the ideal of action which the Messianists cherish, what will they require of any one before they will recognize him as the embodiment of the national destiny?

'To be recognized as Son of God by us, to fulfil a national rôle at this juncture, you will have to lead the way in a desperate, apparently suicidal act. Of your

[1] A Rabbinic comment on Isa. lx. 1, quoted by Edersheim, *Life*, vol. ii, p. 725 f. This, perhaps, is an instance of a particular place recognized as standing in apocalyptic language for a particular idea. Cf. p. 55 *n*.

own accord throw yourself and the People down from the position of security that you have, to meet the dangers that surround you. Thus you will put to the extremest test the reality of Israel's vocation and the truth of God's promise to "keep you in *all* your ways". He is bound to deliver you, whatever you do, and this will be the way to force on the Divine interposition; if He does not interfere then, it will not be your fault, but the failure of His protecting power.'

So we would expound the symbolism of the second temptation, believing that the intransigency and whole political outlook of the Pharisees is intended to be condemned by thus ascribing a characteristic and highly-coloured Messianic *dénouement*, such as might have been pictured in one of their own apocalyptic books, to the suggestion of Satan. This view seems to find a certain amount of warrant in the instances of (to us) crude symbolism abounding in apocalyptic writing, which themselves, no doubt, were interpreted as cryptic references to the events and policies of the day rather than as literal forecasts of the final deliverance. It has been recently suggested that this feature of the literature was as well understood as the political cartoons of modern times;[1] and, if this is so, the first hearers of the Temptation narrative would be keenly alive to any topical judgement veiled under a Messianic picture. The quotation, too, of a psalm like the ninety-first would be in character with Pharisaism on its best side; whether it were commonly interpreted of the whole nation, of the Messiah, or of the individual worshipper in the Temple,[2] it is just the passage that the pious might urge as an argument for hastening the day of conflict.

[1] Dr. Kennett, in the article already referred to.

[2] See the commentators.

The particular application of symbolism for an age and country not our own must always be matter of conjecture; but we are on surer ground for interpreting the temptations when we examine the moral and spiritual import of the great Scripture maxims upon which the story turns. Here, for example, the real clue to the meaning of the Pinnacle-scene will be found in the phrase of Christ's answer, 'It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord Thy God.' The tempting of God has a definite connotation traceable throughout the Biblical writings, and a careful examination of what this is will be found to limit us practically to the interpretation of these verses which we have already outlined. The phrase is never used elsewhere of running into physical danger, simply, in hope of a miracle, so that the associations of our expression 'tempting Providence', derived doubtless from a prima facie interpretation of this passage, must be put aside, even if it were possible on other grounds to suppose our Lord capable of feeling attracted literally to such an act. Nor is the Biblical meaning of the phrase at all satisfied by some of the courses of action which have been supposed to be figuratively suggested, such as demanding miracles for His personal glorification, or the mere claiming in itself of an earthly Messiahship. These things might possibly have been symbolized by a leap from the Temple, but they are not 'tempting God' in the historic sense associated first of all with the incident at Massah.

The *locus classicus* for this sin is Exod. xvii. 7, 'And he called the name of the place Massah (Tempting), and Meribah (Strife), because of the striving of the Children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not?' In

demanding water in the wilderness they were 'trying' their God: they put Him to a test of their own devising—if this thing came about, they would believe in His protecting presence; if not, it was not true that He was their God. Similarly Ps. lxxviii. 18 ff., of a later 'test', 'They tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God; they said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? Behold, He smote the rock, that waters gushed out, and streams overflowed; can He give bread also? Will He provide flesh for His people?"' So King Ahaz covers up his own defective faith by the unctuous reflection that to ask for a manifest token of God's protection, as Isaiah bade him do, would be like doubting it: 'I will not ask,' he cleverly retorts, 'neither will I put Jehovah to the test' (Isa. vii. 10–12).

This, then, is the subtle disloyalty connoted by the 'tempting of God'. It may wear the cloak of exuberant faith and appear to calculate on God's intervention because it is sure of Him; but it is really arrogant and wilful with its sceptical implication that, if God does not come up to the human test, He is no God. Unconsciously it lay beneath all the lapses of the Chosen People (Num. xiv. 22, Ps. lxxviii. 56), for each time that they fell away it implied the thought, 'Let us see if Jehovah will protect us whatever we do'—it was 'trying it on' with Him, in vulgar parlance. But the most illuminating and detailed analysis of the attitude of mind described as 'God-tempting' is found in the apocryphal Book of Judith, Chapters vii and viii. Ozias of Bethulia, in answer to the despairing demand of the inhabitants that he should surrender to the Assyrians, gives Jehovah five days to 'turn His mercy to them', after which he promises to

surrender. This was to demand intervention according to man's conditions, trying to force God to deliver them, and laying the *onus* on Him if no deliverance took place according to their own prescribed plan. It was, as Judith says, 'putting God to the test', setting themselves above Him (viii. 12), wanting to know what He will or will not do. True faith could not put these conditions—knowing that His power is absolute. 'Do not bind the counsels of the Lord our God; for God is not as man, that He may be threatened . . . therefore let us wait for salvation of Him' (viii. 13–17). Wilful surrender will be their own fault, not to be laid on God (viii. 21).

Devising tests for the Almighty, then, 'asking for signs' of His protecting power, any action designed to 'force His hand' (the irreverence of the phrase is apposite!), with the *arrière-pensée* that if He fails the discredit is upon Him—this was the approved meaning of 'tempting God' among the Jews. What possible course of personal action on our Lord's part, short of the literal leap from the Temple-roof, to which there is no other evidence of the applicability of the phrase, will satisfy this meaning? On the other hand we hear a great deal in the Gospels of the Pharisees 'asking for signs', and this was recognized as a characteristic trait of contemporary Judaism by St. Paul (1 Cor. i. 22); and the whole chain of ideas which we have traced in the Old Testament books is most appropriate to the Messianistic temper of which we recalled the meaning in Chapter II. The rigid adherence to the Law as taught by the Pharisaic party, combined with the political dogma that God was pledged sooner or later to put the keepers of His Law in a position of supremacy, was really a test held

ready to be applied to Him. They did not question their own interpretation of what the keeping of the Law involved, but they were always demanding proofs that God was preparing to do His part. Further and further by their own action were they driving Him, so to speak, towards conclusions with the heathen world—courting unnecessarily Roman interference in Palestine,[1] while at the same time fostering the most uncompromising religious bigotry against foreigners. At last the inevitable consequence came in the Jewish War, and the arrogant test was fatally applied, if not directly by the Pharisees, at least as the logical result of their policy. That it was indeed the sceptical spirit of God-tempting that especially underlay this final tragedy, we have the independent testimony of one who writes with authority on questions of Jewish thought. 'It was', says Dr. D. S. Margoliouth, 'a reckless and desperate experiment by which the Zealots meant to settle for ever the question whether the Jehovah of whom they boasted was or was not on a par with the Bels and Nebos ridiculed by their prophets as unable to defend their worshippers or their shrines, and carried into captivity with the nations who served them.'[2]

A curious confirmation of the view that the 'tempting of God' has special application to the Pharisaic outlook on the situation is afforded by a Rabbinic passage

[1] See *ante*, p. 28 f. It was this circumstance that constituted the 'hypocrisy' of their question to our Lord about tribute to Caesar: they had brought the impost upon themselves! Is there an allusion to this feature of the situation in the symbolism of a voluntary abandonment of foothold on the Holy Place? I should be loath to press it, but it is possible.

[2] Introduction to *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (Routledge, 1906), p. ix.

which shows that it sometimes crossed the minds of the Rabbis themselves that strict observance of the Law, with the idea of *proving* the truth of God's promises, might have an element of this sin. A child asks a Rabbi why continual prosperity is assumed in the form which the command about tithe takes in Deut. xiv. 22. 'To teach us that the giving of tithes maketh rich,' is the reply. 'How do you know it?' 'By experience,' answers the Rabbi. 'But', says the child, 'such experiment is not lawful, since we are not to tempt the Lord our God.'[1] Again, we must not forget how the laying of impossible burdens of legal observance on people's necks, characteristic of the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. xxiii. 4), is stigmatized by St. Peter at the Council of Jerusalem as 'tempting God' (Acts xv. 10). The probable meaning is that the rigid legalist, instead of humbly recognizing what is possible for human nature (in others *and himself*—see the exact phraseology of both the passages just quoted), makes his own superficial interpretation into a test of whether God is true to the Covenant or no—if He admits Gentiles to His favour, and denies supremacy to the Law, He will be no God!

C. The Irreligion of Herodianism

(*The 'worship of Satan' to gain the whole world*)

The Tempted One has now learned that neither of the two peculiarly national policies of the time—neither Sadducaism nor Pharisaism—is thinkable as a means of working out the Divine vocation of the 'Son of God', for they are equally inconsistent with Divine commands. But what if Satan is right, and

[1] Quoted by Edersheim, *Life*, vol. i, p. 304 n.

those *are* the only existing ways of gaining recognition for the national redemption designed to be worked out through Him? Must He bid farewell, under stress of the eternal laws, to all the noble hopes awakened by the associations of the call, 'Thou art My Son'? 'Desire of me', so ran the familiar passage of Psalm ii, 'and I will give the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' And now with special insistence rises before His eyes this vision of 'all the kingdoms of the world and their glory', which could be had for the asking. Why not attain the real object of the vocation, and never mind about the *form* of it—the Sonship and the 'holy hill of Zion' and the rest? It is true that they had seemed to be laid down as the first step in the task; and He had thought of the universal spiritual supremacy as destined to centre in Jerusalem and in Himself as heir to all the national promises. But if the nation really will not respond to this ideal in any sense that can be sanctioned by the Divine principles, better to give up hope of that part of the promise, and aim at the ultimate and practicable purpose.

So in the third temptation the premiss, 'If thou art the Son of God', is appropriately left in the background, and the bald suggestion comes of perfect attainment, for the asking, without any trouble of establishing a claim, of all that was desired—with one insignificant condition. 'These things to thee in their totality I will give, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' And the meaning would seem to be that the Chosen People, with its virility, its spiritual level, its vivid hope, which made it 'the greatest people of the East',[1] has the world at its feet, if it will put out

[1] See *ante*, p. 37.

its powers to win it in a common-sense way. The experiment was already going on in the Gentile 'fringes' of the Holy Land. Jesus Himself had been brought up within sight and sound of it.[1] He had seen how the Herodian family was welding large Gentile populations together under a nominally Jewish sway in Galilee 'of the Gentiles' and beyond. These border districts were fitting themselves easily into the great structure of Graeco-Roman civilization; an 'alliance' between Jews and the Empire had been built up, which, at any rate for the present, was working over three-fourths of Palestine; Herods moved in the society of the Imperial court; what was there to prevent the realization of the pre-eminence along earthly lines of Judaism, outgrowing its exclusiveness, in the heathen world?

What indeed—except that it could not be done without recognizing the spiritual authority which held sway in these regions? All this power and glory 'has been delivered to me, and to whomsoever I will I give it' (Luke iv. 6). It was the usual Jewish belief[2] that the Gentile world was under the dominion of Satan; and there is no doubt that that is the sinister presence an instructed Jew would detect in any sort of spiritual allegiance to one head which he found insinuating itself into the congeries of national religions which had accepted the uniting sway of Rome. That the State-religion which the Empire sought to establish as the sum of all native cults was naturally at a later date associated in apocalyptic writing with Satan, is proved

[1] See Sir W. M. Ramsay, *The Education of Christ.*

[2] Dr. Kennett (in the article quoted before) regards the idea of gods ruling different lands as *not* literal belief but apocalyptic phraseology. So this passage may be one more indication that we are dealing here throughout with an apocalyptic parable.

by the form of allusion in Rev. ii. 13 to Pergamum as being a centre of Caesar-worship. And so, by this time, it would very likely be a quite intelligible thought to a contemporary that Herodianism, with its compromising allegiance to the imperial idea, with its temples erected to Rome and Augustus, best fulfilled the idea of national apostasy and was *par excellence* a prostration of Israel before the Spirit of Paganism as the price of gaining the whole world.

In further chapters I shall try to show how the Herodian ideal had its special attraction for Jesus ; and we shall see that at a crucial point of the Ministry, travelling on the very fringe of the Holy Land, perhaps within sight of one of these tokens of Herodian paganism, and at a moment when the decision is being made to be loyal to the historic vocation at all costs, He seems to recall the very course of this temptation and the cry with which He had rebutted it. In any case now the answer to the suggestion, as we have interpreted it, is appropriate and decisive. 'Satan, avaunt! It is true that dominion over the heathen is what I desire for the Jewish race, and what it would win if it responded to God's call. But, purchased at the price of regarding the religion of Jehovah as just one in a pagan confederation of cults, this boon is unthinkable ; for it is written, Him *only* shalt thou serve ; and the price demanded would defeat the object of the boon, for it was only that he might lead "the kings and judges of the earth *to serve Jehovah* with fear" (Ps. ii. 10), that the Son of God was bidden to desire "the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession".'

Before we leave this attempt to explain the symbolism and phraseology of the Temptation narrative as having a political reference, it is necessary to anticipate an objection which is certain to be brought against it. If the first meaning of the incident is thus made to be a testing of the Christ in the principles which should govern the nation's course in a particular time of crisis—if the disciples to whom the story was first imparted were intended to recognize therein a condemnation of existing national policies to which they may have expected their Master to conform—what becomes, it may fairly be asked, of the moral and Christological value which this event has always been held to possess for the Christian Church? Are you not narrowing down to a meditation on contemporary and accidental circumstances what has been before regarded as a great drama of the spiritual world, in which the Incarnate Son experienced all the seductions to evil that assail human life (apart from sin), and by his steadfastness on that one occasion potentially defeated them all, or at least gave an example of resistance strictly applicable to all such assaults?

In reply to this criticism, it may be noted first that the Gospels themselves give no indication that the experience spoken of in Heb. iv. 15 (*πεπειρασμένον κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα*) was all comprehended in this one onslaught. St. Luke (iv. 13), indeed, speaks of the devil on this occasion as having 'accomplished every temptation', but in the same sentence says that he departed from the Lord only 'for a season'. 'Temptations' are recorded to have come again and again to Christ in the questions addressed to Him in His Ministry, and He speaks of 'His temptations' (Luke xxii. 28) in which the disciples have been with

Him. Unless, then, temptations in the political sphere are excluded from Satan's operation, the Temptation in the Wilderness, even if our interpretation destroyed all typical significance in the story, might still hold its place as one part of the representative experience of human temptation that befell our Lord in His earthly life.

But, to touch for a moment on the fundamental problem of Christ's human experience, must not the value of His temptations for us rather depend on their having arisen from some particular set of circumstances in each case? Though our faith demands that His Incarnate Life should be 'typical' in the sense that the answer to all human needs and problems can be deduced from it, still there must be in the first instance the ὁμοιότης of which the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv. 15) speaks in this connexion. We require for our comfort that His temptations should have been really like what we experience, and though He differs from us in His sinlessness and unique vocation, we may reverently say that a comprehensive encounter with all evil seductions in the abstract, having no reference to the conditions of His human life, would be so alien to our experience that it would be useless as a revelation of sympathy, whatever other purpose it might serve. And, granted that similarity of human conditions is what we look for in a record of Christ's temptations, the writer may plead that the interpretation given in these pages even of the first historical meaning of this record, apart from secondary implications, touches human life more extensively and is really less limited to a particular application, than the most usual primary reference of it to our Lord's use of unique powers. For the actual political seductions supposed to be held before Him were such as might affect, and did affect, the

whole nation of the Jews, and had to be refused by the Early Church, if it was to carry on His work ; whereas the temptation to misuse Messianic powers is not in any direct sense what ordinary men have to face.

But it is not hard to find the comprehensive significance underlying the narrative, even if the primary historical meaning is, as we believe, best discoverable in the political circumstances of the time. The record, so interpreted, will be found to correspond with some essential features of human temptation, at least as it affects those who have the consciousness of vocation, to whom alone, perhaps, temptation in the true sense applies. And, further, the ' Great Refusals ' of our Lord, concerned as they are according to our view with national circumstances, have also according to our view a direct and intimate connexion with His redemptive work for the world.

Jesus turned away from the existing policies because, while offering each in its way plausible methods for nominal obedience combined with success in this world, they were really disloyal to fundamental principles and were therefore useless for their purpose. As Professor Gwatkin indicates in the passage placed at the head of this chapter, to gain success for an unredeemed Judaism in the world would not have touched the problem of human sin or advanced the cause of true religion one whit. And is not all temptation the insistent presentation before our eyes of a possible and attractive course of action, superficially consistent with our vocation in the world, but which ignores the deeper facts as to our relation with God ? It may be the vulgarest attraction to the satisfaction of material needs ; yet we say to ourselves with some plausibility, ' We have a right to demand from God things which are

admittedly necessary to maintain our earthly life', and this half-truth hides from our view the deeper fact that 'bread alone' is useless, that the satisfaction of material wants must be subordinated to a lively faith in God's promises—a faith with which in this case the demand conflicts. Or, believing nominally, even with apparent tenacity, in the Divine promises, we are attracted by the easy course of adherence to an external code of duty, saving ourselves the trouble of seeking fresh light, and leaving the *onus* of rewarding us upon God. This is to hide from ourselves the deeper principle of God's searching requirements, to make our own reckless blindness the measure of His character, in other words to 'put Him to a test' of our own devising whether He will save us or no. How clearly are typified in this second temptation not only the perils of bigotry in the ecclesiastical sphere, but the danger of religion in the individual becoming a sort of sceptical speculation[1] on prosperity in this world and happiness in the life to come! And, lastly, it is an abiding danger to the man who has a broad outlook on the practical objects of religion that he will merge his scheme of faith and worship in the pursuit of the visible interests of the world—not so much doing what is definitely evil 'that good may come', as being content with the apparent attainment of his ideals through worldly forces and allowing these to divide his allegiance with the One True God. This forgetting of the deeper personal claim of God—His 'jealousy' transcending all His practical requirements—is a seductive snare for a certain type of mind. So some at least of the early martyrs would feel the strain of having to deny divinity

[1] Cf. the Rabbinic saying about 'God-tempting' quoted *ante*, pp. 67–8.

to the beneficent system of the Roman Empire ; and more subtle still and harder to distinguish from truth must be the claim to our allegiance of a modern civilization largely permeated with Christian ideas.

While it is not contended that the record of the Temptation in the Wilderness must needs be interpreted so as to constitute an exhaustive classification of the sins to which men are tempted, this brief outline may show that, according to the explanation here put forward, Christ was brought face to face with attractions which do in all ages draw men away from their allegiance to God. In giving a political import to the Temptation story there is no detraction from its permanent value as a witness to His comprehensive human experience. But its rightful significance for Christian disciples is safeguarded in yet another way, if our interpretation has any truth in it ; and that is by the intimate connexion of the Temptation with the whole scheme of Christ's Redemption.

According to the theory submitted with all humility in these pages, the condemnation and refusal of the existing native policies foreshadowed in the Temptation was but the logical and historical preliminary of a policy which faced the real problem of the situation—the sin of the world. To have brought about a Sadducaic, Pharisaic, or Herodian triumph would have been to seal the fate of religion at that crisis. The decision taken in the Wilderness, and acted upon throughout the Ministry, cleared the way for and humanly speaking made inevitable the mightier expedient which concentrated all the irreligion of the time against One who, by ' bearing it in His own body on the tree ', showed its hateful issue and broke its power.

So, in the working out of Christ's Redemption for the

human soul in all ages, the Temptation must have its import. In Him will be found first a power of deliverance from false attractions; and that, to the extent that it is accepted and utilized, will narrow down the disciple's course, as it did His, to the way of the Cross and to the reception of those outward 'marks of the Lord Jesus' which testify to our redemption in Him. Rightly does the Christian Church in its cry for deliverance ever urge His 'Fasting and Temptation' in their due place on the ascending scale of what the Good Lord has done for us.

CHAPTER V

THE PUBLIC POLICY OF JESUS CHRIST

'[God] sent His word to the children of Israel preaching a gospel of peace through Jesus Christ. . . . Ye [Roman soldiers of Caesarea] know the affair which arose through all Jewry, starting from Galilee after the baptism which John proclaimed, Jesus the man from Nazareth, how God anointed him with holy spirit and power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, because God was with him.'—Acts x. 36–8.

'. . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: Land of Zebulon and land of Nephthalim, the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and upon those that sat in the land and shadow of death did light arise.'—Matt. iv. 16.

'Hypocrites, ye know how to discern the appearance of the earth and the sky: but how is it ye discern not this crisis? And why even of yourselves do ye not decide what is just? . . . I say unto thee, never wilt thou come out thence till thou hast paid the last farthing of thy debt!'—Luke xii. 56–9.

In vindicating a political interpretation of the Temptation from the charge of triviality it has been necessary to anticipate somewhat the course of our argument, in order to show how a decision resulting, as regards its occasion, from a survey of political conditions, would have a direct connexion with the Death upon the cross and the crowning work of Redemption. We return now to consider in brief the outward aspect of Christ's public Ministry from the beginning, asking in the present chapter whether the 'good news of the kingdom' which He proclaimed did not involve the adoption by the Chosen People of a true national policy, alternative to the policies refused in advance at the

time of the Temptation; and whether, by its very divergence from these, His appeal did not bring upon Him an antagonism of evil will which in the circumstances necessarily took the shape of political hatred. Just as the terms of the Baptismal Call and the historical reminiscence that hung round that second wandering in the Wilderness must (we think) have suggested to those who were aware of them a vocation that was to be realized in and through the whole nation, so in the recorded facts of the Ministry we discern all through a fundamental aim of national appeal, to which individual and local ministrations were only subservient. And this appeal to the Jewish race in its official character was for something more than preparation for a catastrophic end; it demanded at any rate a diversion of the national life into new courses of which the end might not be yet; and the change of mind indicated and hoped for was just such as would have met the world-crisis, had it been realized. Lastly, so far from such ideas as political reconciliation being outside the scope of Christ's earthly Ministry, we shall have to discuss what seem to be some definite pronouncements on the peril and unreasonableness of Jewish intransigence towards Gentile rights.

1. *The appeal of Jesus was for a national repentance.*

All the evidence both of the Gospels and the Acts suggests that the Ministry of Jesus was regarded by contemporaries and inaugurated by Himself as a continuation of the Baptist's work. St. Mark (i. 14), confirmed by St. Matthew (iv. 12), dates the formal beginning of the public Ministry from the moment when John's active work was closed by the hostility of Herod, and presents it as the renewal on fresh ground

of John's characteristic appeal; nor do the later discussions as to Jesus' relation to the ministry of the Baptist reveal any intention on our Lord's part to narrow the palpable scope of the mission, as if He was finally abandoning the whole nation for the sake of the individual convert or the authorities at Jerusalem for the crowds of Galilee. Now John's movement was essentially national in its reach and aim: it addressed itself to all classes of the community from the rulers at Jerusalem downwards, and announced the crisis ('the kingdom of God is at hand') which at that time could not have been envisaged by the Prophet except as a matter of national concern; the reigning coterie of Sadducees and Pharisees might be dispensed with from the approaching day of the Lord's victory, but the tale of Abraham's children must be somehow made up, that an entity representative of the Chosen People may come out safe from the wrath to come (Matt. iii. 7–9, Luke iii. 7–8). So it is that the main Gospel tradition introduces the Baptist to us as 'the Voice' which heralds the nation's deliverance from captivity, before it records the particular function fulfilled by him according to the Lord's more intimate teaching.[1] Regarding John's mission, then, as an appeal to the organized national life, we are prepared to find our Lord, whose Ministry emerged from that other as its starting-point, appearing in the same light as One whose main objective was the People in its corporate capacity and who earnestly desired a national response to His appeal. How the mission to Galilee may be

[1] The addition of the quotation from Malachi in Mark i. 2, looks like the work of a redactor borrowing from Q (Matt. xi. 10, Luke vii. 27), and differs from most other Marcan quotations in being independent of the Septuagint. In any case, if original in Mark, it was not adopted as suitable in this place by the other two.

conjectured to have subserved this aim will be considered in a later section of this chapter; and, as evidence on the surface of such a purpose and hope shaping the methods and utterances of the Ministry, we need but refer now to the indications of haste to cover as much native ground as possible whether by His own ministrations or through His disciples (Mark. i. 38, vi. 7–11; Matt. xv. 24),[1] and the bitter expression of disappointment, difficult to understand if there had been no hope from the first of corporate repentance, at the obduracy of those Galilean towns (Matt. xi. 20, Luke x. 13), whose conversion would necessarily have influenced the attitude of the capital. Again, the constant pains taken to explain or rebuke, when the official critics demurred to and opposed His work, would seem as clear an indication of the Master's national outlook as their interference is evidence of the national significance attributed to Him by contemporaries. The real proof of the thesis that the appeal of Jesus was to the nation must be found not so much in isolated acts and words, as in the general view that is taken of the Gospel story, and particularly of the motive that underlay the last return to Jerusalem. The position of this essay with regard to these points will be made clear as we proceed; all that has been attempted here is to recall a few obvious facts to refute the exaggerated statements one sometimes meets as to our Lord's indifference to the national attitude of the Jews and His sole interest in the ministration to individuals.

[1] The incident of the Syro-Phoenician woman will be discussed later, pp. 116–17.

2. *The appeal of Jesus was not limited by 'eschatological' considerations, but demanded a seminal change in the national outlook.*

The view maintained in the last section of the national scope of the Ministry would, I suppose, be generally admitted by students of the Gospels to-day. But a brilliant and powerful school of critics would at once add to the nationalism of Jesus the restriction that His purpose was to prepare the nation for an immediate catastrophe, and that therefore He would not for the determination of His course take cognizance of the mundane situation of affairs nor of such questions as the reconciliation of Judaism with the Empire or (still less) the interests of the Gentile world; in fact, that for this reason it would be useless to seek, as we are seeking, for any *direct and conscious* contribution on the part of the 'historical Jesus' to the progress of world events. It is true that even the most extreme exponents of this 'eschatological' mode of interpretation do not deny the greatness and significance of the appearance of Jesus in history; indeed we may gratefully acknowledge that this demand to take His 'super-natural' claims (as they used to be called) in the literal meaning of the time and country, and as an original part of the Gospel tradition, has been an effective challenge to those who would eliminate all mysteriousness from the personality of our Lord. But the one-sided exaggeration of the eschatological element, which would make the immediate coming of the kingdom the whole motive of the Ministry, inevitably discounts the importance for Jesus of the wider interests of the world as they might be conceived at the time by those who did not expect an immediate end of all things: and for us who look back on the actual course of events it must

have a serious effect, if true, on our conceptions of the Gospel, quite apart from the particular thesis maintained in these pages. For, while claiming to bring our Lord into relation with contemporary ideas and to give the only satisfactory explanation of contemporary belief in Him,[1] this exclusive emphasis on the eschatological element in the story shuts Him within a particularly narrow range of contemporary thought; it conceives of Him as evading, or only answering unconsciously and through illusion, the most insistent question of practical politics for a Jew of that time—the relation of Judaism to the Empire; and wholly fails to explain how the expectation that the hopes of Jewish apocalyptic were going to be realized in Jesus should have such influence on contemporary minds not trained in those ideas. A few remarks, therefore, may be made on this prevalent line of interpretation both generally and as it affects the argument of this essay.

That the apocalyptic hope is present in the Gospels and also represents a real element in the original teaching, will not at this date be denied. But to maintain that it alone constituted for Christ and His first disciples the revelation of 'ultimate values and eternal issues', that for them 'practical and local interests' had rolled away because they were watching 'at the bedside of a dying world',[2] that the hope of an approaching end was the efficient cause rather than the visionary sanction of the new outlook on life that Jesus gave, is to assume what is not borne out by religious experience

[1] See e. g. Burkitt, *Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus* (1910), pp. 71–6. But Prof. Burkitt himself points out (*Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, p. 44) that this would not apply to converts from heathenism.

[2] The phrases are from Mr. Streeter's Essay, 'The Historic Christ' in *Foundations* (1912), pp. 119–20.

as to the power of eschatological belief ;[1] nor is the alleged result of such expectancy at all demonstrable in the present case. For though it be superficially true, in the epigrammatic phrase of Mr. Streeter, that the New Testament contains no judgements on 'the condition of slaves in Capernaum or the sanitation of Tarsus',[2] yet St. James thought the sweating of agricultural labourers worth denouncing in spite of, or rather because of, the near coming of the Lord (James v. 3–5) ; St. Paul was very jealous for the proper administration of justice in a Roman colony, though some years later he was still writing to the Christians of the same place, 'The Lord is near' (Acts xvi. 37, Phil. iv. 5) ; and in the Gospels, be the eschatological interest what it may, the last thing it can be said to have done is to have eclipsed the 'practical and local' either in the ministrations of our Lord or in the memories of the disciples. I would even be bold to say that we perhaps *have* a judgement on 'the condition of slaves in Capernaum' implied in the picturesque setting of an actual apocalypse (Matt. xxiv. 45–51, Luke xii. 42–6) : what more likely than that indignation at the thought of unwatchful disciples should have gained point from the remembrance of some bullying house-steward in what was at one time 'His own city' ? (cf. Matt. ix. 1 with Mark ii. 1).

With our present means of estimating the various strands in the transmission of Gospel history it would be rash to declare for an original either wholly eschatological or wholly non-eschatological. What seems to emerge from the maturer consideration of the eschato-

[1] See Dr. Inge's sermon on this subject before Cambridge University, printed in the *Guardian* of May 13, 1910 : 'Eschatology is never the root, but the fruit of a creed.'

[2] Streeter, op. cit., p. 120.

logist's challenge,[1] and what is sufficient for our present purpose, is that, taking the Gospels as they stand, we at least have evidence that, whatever part eschatological belief played in the thought and teaching of Jesus, it did not in fact preclude Him from the widest outlook on things as they were, or from appealing for far-reaching changes of human endeavour. A dominating expectancy of the end (such as is attributed both to John and Jesus) would not have wasted time on denunciations at the court of Herod or on vindication of the rights of Caesar ; and it would surely have concentrated on ' signs ' to convince the rulers of God's approaching intervention rather than on seminal principles of human amendment such as God's independence of a nominal People (Matt. iii. 9, Luke iii. 8), or the true meaning of defilement (Mark vii. 15), which would and did take long to fructify. The practical interest, the demand for ' fruit ', observable in the teaching of Jesus and of John before Him, far outstrips the limitations of the apocalyptic idea and places Him in direct line with the older and more sanguine prophetic demand for co-operation with God and for national amendment such as would itself help to establish the ' kingdom ' by doing the things God wanted done. And the clearest proof of conscious action on the general situation of the time through moral appeal, in opposition to the representation of Jesus as simply obsessed by the thought of imminent catastrophe, lies, to our thinking, in the revolutionary character of the attack. We have referred in the last section to the indications there are of haste to cover as much as possible of a limited field with the messa ge but it is a limitation of outward extent only, there is

[1] See, e. g., von Dobschütz, *The Eschatology of the Gospels*.

assuredly no accommodation of the depth of demand within that field to meet the necessities of an immediate crisis. The drastic challenges involved in the public Ministry, the breaking away from all current ideas of divine requirements, the outrages on convention, ill accord with a dominant expectation of catastrophe or the mere establishment of an *Interims-Ethik*. Many of the Pharisees must have believed in the near approach of the Kingdom, but this faith had not suggested to them to revise their conceptions of God's requirements or of the attitude due towards Galileans, publicans, or Samaritans. And we may with all reverence argue that, if the only general difference of motive between their teaching and the Gospel of the Kingdom was the certainty and definiteness with which Jesus anticipated the divine intervention—if there were no principles at stake for Him in the world beyond the immediate triumph of a reformed Israel over all other forces and aspirations—a more likely policy of preparation in His case too would have been to make the best of what was undoubtedly good in the prevailing ideas and to concentrate effort on the leaders and head-quarters of the nation's life, rather than to alienate even the good elements by the startling enunciation of new principles and the breaking of new ground, which, humanly speaking, must take a long time to develop. His 'new cloth', and 'wine' that had still to mature, would have been the very worst expedients for a decrepit church which had only to be bolstered up 'to reach her crown' in the immediate future. Fanatic revolutionary *action*, in the political sphere, may be the fruit of eschatologism, as is seen in the case of Zealotism, which our Lord did not countenance; but revolution in *ideas*, moral or political, if we may adduce

ordinary parallels in this matter, would rather seem to be evidence of deep and wide consideration of the existing order, and of the hope that it can be progressively amended by new lines of effort, than of a vivid expectation of the end, which certainly in the Pharisees' case rather obscured the need of moral change.[1]

Here, as always in the attempt to visualize the course of these great events, we must find a reasonable explanation for the action of opponents. If the dominant aspect of the Ministry was eschatological, why should the authorities, and especially the Pharisees, have looked on it with suspicion from the first? If it was merely the greater purity and consistency of One who was proclaiming a favourite hope and dogma, that made them so bitterly hostile, they must have been corrupt indeed. An explanation fairer to the religion of the time, and, in our opinion, historically truer, is that Jesus was recognized to be making demands for a change in the national outlook which went counter to the ideals of Messianism, and against which they had hardened their hearts just because it required an alteration of purpose less easy and flattering to their pride than the policy of awaiting God's intervention with folded hands. What this change of outlook was, how the appeal for it was made, and its connexion with the political situation, must now be considered.

[1] The advocates of eschatological interpretation, in their more imaginative moments, offer us Revolutionary Socialism as a modern parallel to the apocalyptic temper. But the Marxian dogma of a final crisis, bringing the new order in its train, differs from the Messianist hope in being itself an induction from existing conditions; but even if it were a closer parallel than it is, it could never by itself account for the general attitude of Socialists (as to Capitalism, &c.), which bases itself on a comprehensive survey of the present order and on the belief that this can be transformed in time by human effort.

3. *The appeal of Jesus was for a policy of humanization and extension in face of the politico-religious crisis.*

The Q tradition contained a saying of Jesus that the only 'sign' that would be vouchsafed to that generation was 'the sign of Jonah' (Matt. xii. 39 ‖ Luke xi. 29, Matt. xvi. 4). That 'St. Matthew' embodies the saying in two places of his narrative, once in connexion with the charge that Jesus cast out devils through Beelzebub, and again on the occasion of the final demand for a sign from heaven (Mark viii. 11–13 ‖ Matt. xvi. 1–4), would seem to mark it as a characteristic and crucial feature of the teaching, in that Evangelist's view. The same conclusion may be drawn from the fact that St. Luke felt compelled to record it, although he either rejects, or is not cognizant of, the detailed explanation of the parallel (Matt. xii. 40) as a prophecy of the Resurrection, and merely assimilates the meaning of the allusion to the following saying about the repentance of the Ninevites by the interpretation that 'Jonah was a sign' to those men. This is clearly inadequate to the implications of the word 'sign', which indicates some more special manifestation of God's power than the mere preaching of repentance: and there is much to be said for the view that the Matthaean writer in his application of the parallel reproduces an original element in our Lord's personal use of Old Testament types if not actually in His public teaching.[1] But it may fairly be contended that even this detailed explanation does not exhaust the

[1] See Mr. Bonus's careful article 'Jonah', in *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*, which suggests that the story of Jonah's deliverance was the most likely 'Scripture proof' of a resurrection on the third day (Luke xxiv. 46). Mark viii. 31, Matt. xxvii. 63 testify to a foretelling of the event in the form 'after three days', which may point to the pre-Resurrection use of this parallel.

significance of the example of Jonah, and I would argue that what first turned our Lord's thoughts to that story —the deduction as to the detailed mode of the ' sign ' being only secondary—was the entire lesson of the prophetic book. The ' sign ' of Jonah to any thoughtful Jew would be the striking manifestation of Jehovah's pity for an ignorant people prevailing not only over the wilful and suicidal narrowness of His chosen messenger, but over His own first decree of judgement, and clinched with a vindication of the Divine prerogative of mercy even against his will by the prophet's own purely selfish feeling as to the destruction of life. A re-enactment of that story is what Jesus conceives to be the sufficient and unmistakable ' sign ' prepared for His generation. God commands His servant Israel to proclaim repentance to the people ' which knoweth not the law ' ; Israel will refuse even to the point of self-destruction in the person of its Messiah, but the purpose of mercy will prevail even over that catastrophe —the nation by God's power will be brought through disaster to fulfil its mission, even the authoritative proclamation of God's wrath in the Law will give way before the repentance of the Gentiles, and the People's narrow jealousy of this change will at last stand convicted by the more fundamental law that God's mercy must be ' over all His works '. So in a saying, which the divergence of the explanations given by the two Evangelists forbids us to class as merely an accepted ' Scripture proof ' of the Resurrection, devised (as some critics might say) subsequently by the Church, we may not improbably have contemporary evidence of Jesus' conscious contribution to the world-problem of the time, and of a prediction not mainly of the precise circumstances of His Resurrection but (what was more

important) of the general historical sequel—that the Son of Man's present teaching of mercy would after a short reverse continue on its triumphant way and that when He had ' overcome the sharpness of death ' He would ' open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers '.

The declaration of policy which we have found in the allusion to the ' sign of Jonah ' might well be obscure to the rulers who did not wish to understand it. Not so the starting of a mission to Galilee and the lines upon which it was being carried out. These constituted a definite appeal to the nation for a change of outlook and action—an appeal which it did not mistake and which brought on Jesus for state reasons the determined opposition of both the national parties. The choice of Galilee as a field for evangelization, an objective still holding good even after the last return to Jerusalem, according to Mark xiv. 28 || Matt. xxvi. 32, was a practical demonstration of what was the next step required by God from His People. Jesus by example was calling the nation to do its duty to ' the lost sheep of the house of Israel ' (Matt. xv. 24). And this choice in itself brought Him into direct conflict with the political ideal of the rulers at Jerusalem, who had long abandoned any care for the native population of the North and had nothing but hate for the Herodian measures of sound government there (cf. *ante*, pp. 23 ff). Thus as regards any interest taken in them by the official heads of the nation the Galileans were in the condition deprecated by Moses (Num. xxvii. 17) and visualized by the prophet Micaiah at the time of Ahab's disaster (1 Kings xxii. 17)—' as sheep not having a shepherd ', a people deprived of its natural leaders. Our Lord, the true Patriot, pitied them as such (Matt. ix. 36, Mark. vi. 34), and His care for the religious

interests of the Northerners among whom He had been brought up was in itself a direct rebuke and challenge to the shepherds whose deliberate policy now was to feed themselves.[1]

The Pharisees on the other hand had not in theory renounced their responsibility for Galilee. The presence of so many of them in those parts and the anxiety with which they followed the teaching and actions of Jesus showed that the Herodian provinces were not excluded from their scheme of national deliverance. But it was the method and spirit of Jesus' Ministry that was a challenge to them. They would have drilled the crowds of Galileans into strict observance of the Law. If healing there was to be, they must come and be healed on lawful days and not on the Sabbath. Such teachers did not understand the love of men for their own sake, that spirit of ἔλεος which God required from His people, in which they were intended to spread the knowledge of Him to those on the borders and those outside for their own sake and not for the glorification of the Law.[2] And therefore the Pharisees were only repelled by His works of mercy not according to rule, attributed such unorthodox cures to the Prince of the devils, and grew more and more angry with a ministry

[1] For the declension of Hasmonean views on the obligations of the rulers to the northern population, and for the use of the 'sheep' metaphor in *Test. XII Patr.* in this connexion, see Burkitt, *Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, pp. 36, 37.

[2] Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7; cf. also pp. 5, 13 and *n.* of this Essay. The principle of 'humanity' as outweighing legal obligation is quoted from Hosea in the Hebrew form, which stamps the citation as probably original and characteristic. It is used to justify a mission to those regarded as outcasts, and, in the second case, a humane relaxing of the Law before the greater claim of human needs: law as interpreted by the Pharisees might be a cruel 'condemnation of the guiltless'. In these pronouncements lay the very seed of extension and of the downfall of Judaism.

to Herodian tax-gatherers and other excommunicate persons. A mission of this kind would not fit in with their idea of the political future of God's People—of a strictly law-abiding Remnant awaiting a sign of God's intervention—and they recognized and hated this course for what it was, viz. an appeal to them for the fruit which they were determined not to give, the gradual extension of boundaries to draw in the world to the benefits of the Jewish religion.

Whether Jesus ever proved in action that He looked beyond the lost sheep of the house of Israel to a more universal mission, is a moot point depending on the view we take of our authorities.[1] My contention here is that the generally admitted facts of a Galilean ministry, of the methods there followed, and of the hostility aroused, even if we accept St. Mark's picture alone, are ample evidence that He stood for a policy of humanization and extension quite incompatible with the prevailing native theories. The mingling with the Herodian elements of the country, the defiances of convention occurring just where sickness was to be healed, hunger to be satisfied, or sinners to be comforted, the indignation at Pharisaic interference, all show that it was not the unreality only of the formalists but the inhumanity of exclusiveness bound up with it that He was fighting against. And this was just the spirit of Judaism which made reconciliation and understanding between the Empire with its humane purpose and the official religion so unlikely ; it was the freedom from it, even to the extent of laxness, which at any rate had made

[1] One may recall the incident of the Centurion (not in St. Mark) ; also the significant note of Matt. xv. 31, 'they glorified Israel's God', which implies a work among Gentiles. See also the nature of the attitude taken towards the Syro-Phoenician, as explained on pp. 116–17.

the Herodian governments a hopeful experiment, and according to our view explains our Lord's choice of Herodian territories and Herodian friends. Further, it may be true, as Professor Bacon supposes,[1] that the discourse on the Traditions of the Elders has been too definitely read by a Marcan redactor as an anticipation of St. Peter's vision (cf. Mark vii. 19 with Acts x. 15, &c.), and of the subsequent close connexion, practical as well as symbolical, between abolition of ceremonial rules and extension to the Gentiles; but if Jesus uttered any discourse at all, with the solemnity and emphasis ascribed by the Evangelists, on the subject of True and False Defilement, which history proves to have been the real dividing question between Judaism and the Gentile world, I believe it to be unscientific criticism to contend that His outlook was as limited as that of His generation, and that He had no thought of a reconciliation between Jewish religion and the Roman Empire, or of the preaching of the Gospel to Gentiles.

4. *In particular Jesus took account of the Roman peril and recognized Roman rights.*

But, granting that there is this element (and it can hardly be denied) of humanization and extension to be found in the teaching and actions of our Lord's public Ministry, it may be urged that this was but the common inheritance from the great prophetic writers of the Old Testament, shadowing forth a vague universalism implicit in the Jewish religion, and that it did not amount to the formation of an immediate policy to meet an actual crisis consciously faced. Is there any evidence, it will be asked, to justify the position taken up in these pages that the crisis Jesus had in view was

[1] *The Beginnings of Gospel Story*, on Mark vii.

definitely the approaching conflict between Rome and Judaea, that the purpose of His Ministry was to avert that conflict, if it might be, by the conversion of His People, and that, when the attempt at conversion proved hopeless, He consciously adopted a course which was to avert the worst effect of a fatal conflict, the submergence of the treasure which the Jews held in trust for the world? We must recall here, then, the few secure indications that the Gospels supply of Jesus' thoughts as to the Roman power, and see whether we may find in them the desire for a mutual understanding between the antagonistic forces, the determination to show the good side of Judaism to the Imperial view while recognizing the reasonable rights of the stronger power, and, over all, the clear vision of Roman conquest as the alternative to repentance, which are implied in our view of His purpose.

There are several reasons why allusions to the Roman menace or the declaration of a philo-Roman attitude are not to be expected in the earlier Galilean period. The Roman question could not loom quite so large in districts where a successful compromise with Imperialism held the field; the Galileans were neither so directly in contact with the Roman government as the Jews had now become, nor probably had they the orthodox horror of Gentile sway which constituted the danger in Jerusalem. Further, one can understand that, while there was hope of repentance and the awakening of religious feeling, a direct appeal to political considerations or a plea for the Gentile point of view would be needless stumbling-blocks in the way of national conversion.[1] Nevertheless, beneath the surface, there was

[1] See Sharman, *The Teaching of Jesus about the Future* (Chicago, 1909), p. 107; this writer gives a telling summary of the political background of Jesus' Ministry.

the strongest evidence of respect for Roman rights and of a considered view of Israel's true position in the world in the mere abstention from revolt. Knowing as we do the fury of Zealotism that was gradually rising in the country from the time that Jesus was ten years old, we are justified in recognizing His hiding from success as, at any rate, partly a deliberate dissociation of Himself from anti-Roman views. Neither Pilate nor Herod, we are told, could find any fault with Him on this score. And in the later Ministry, when the decision to die had been taken, and no purpose could be served by softening the unwelcome truth any longer in the hope that 'of themselves' they would 'judge what was right' (Luke xii. 57), we find ever clearer indications that He foresaw the disastrous conflict towards which the Jews were heading by their rejection of His message, and held that they themselves were to blame. Nor are these indications only such as might conceivably have been read into the story in the light of subsequent events.

More important, e.g., than the direct allusions in St. Luke to a Roman siege, is the incidental conversation about the Galilean victims of Pilate's rigour (Luke xiii. 1–3). Whether the information was brought as a moral problem for solution, or, as Dr. Sharman suggests,[1] was a friendly warning to our Lord against a public entry into the city, the comment thereupon is striking in its divergence from the ordinary native outlook. There is no denunciation of the sacrilegious cruelty of the foreigner, which would have been natural on the lips of one whose vision was bounded by the apocalyptic hope—no acquiescence in the comfortable doctrine that God could only have permitted such a defeat

[1] op. cit., p. 107.

because the men were exceptional ' sinners ', i. e. lax in their observance of the Law. No ! God was not pledged to be on the nationalist side and against the Roman government, whatever the obstinate folly of the nation might be ; and unless the Chosen People repent—attain a real change of mind from present ideas—they are all going to perish in like manner, i. e. by the Roman sword. A remarkable anticipation, surely, in a passage which is nevertheless not so obviously predictive as to have been subject to the colouring of a later age. And, so interpreted, it links on well to its assigned context (' at that very time ', Luke xiii. 1), which was an impassioned exhortation to ' read the crisis ', and be quit of the adversary while there is time and before the just due of submission is wrung out by force ! (*τὸ δίκαιον* xii. 57 ; and compare *ἀποδῷς* xii. 59 with the phraseology of the dictum on the Tribute, which we are about to consider).

On the apparent prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the last parables and discourses we will not lay stress, as it is open to argue that they are not original. If, however, our Lord spoke of the Vineyard being given ' to others ' (Mark xii. 9), and foretold the utter ruin of the *Temple* (xiii. 2), and nothing further, that in itself would suggest an anticipated End in direct contravention of the orthodox view of the Roman occupation and what was to follow.

But we pass now from what might be only anticipations of the issue of the crisis to a distinct judgement on its rights and wrongs. I refer to the great saying about the Tribute, which, together with the denunciation of the Bravos' Cave emphasized in a former chapter, establishes for Christ that sympathetic attitude to the

Roman point of view, which the authorities as politicians would never entertain and which was but one symbol of the whole moral and spiritual meaning of His message as a plea for the recognition of Gentile rights. It is necessary to examine this incident in some detail, as its significance for those times is often obscured either by a superficial interpretation of the dictum as a mere debating point, or by deep philosophical deductions as to the permanent relations of Church and State supposed to be implied in it. We have to note (*a*) how the motive of our Lord's answer is far more than a desire to counter the insidious malice of His enemies, though He did that very successfully for the moment ; and (*b*) how vastly important the utterance was for that particular age and situation as a new principle to govern the relations of religious men to the powers that be.

(*a*) From the point of view of the Sanhedrin, the question was a very cleverly devised ' catch ' contrived, with every aid of circumstance, to betray Him into a Messianistic utterance that it was *not* permissible to a faithful Jew to pay tribute to Caesar, and so to involve Him with the Roman government (Luke xx. 20) ; or, failing that, if through fear of consequences He answered that it *was* permissible, they counted on His losing popularity with the crowd—they would be able to ' take hold of his saying before the People ' (Luke xx. 26). That it was the former result they most desired is shown by the choice of Pharisees [1] as agents in

[1] The reason for the presence of ' Herodians ' is obscure, because we do not know who these were. If they were a party in favour of a Herodian petty kingship uniting the whole country (as would seem likely), and if our Lord was known to be (as this Essay contends) drawn towards that element in the conflicting sympathies of the day, their presence might be an additional inducement to

the scheme, who could plausibly pretend conscientious scruples about the tribute (Luke xx. 20), and appeal to His expected sympathy with fearless righteousness rather than with Sadducaic compromise. The hypocrisy and pure personal hostility underlying the question according to the Gospel account is confirmed by our knowledge that neither Sadducees nor Pharisees wanted at that time to elicit any Messianistic declaration that should escape the vigilance of the Roman authorities and be effective in ' perverting the People ' ; nor were they by now concerned to probe into His teaching on any debatable point : for they had already determined to destroy Him. If they themselves had any idea of ' testing ' Him (τί με πειράζετε ;), it was to try whether the attraction of a reputation for fearlessness or (in the alternative) the fear of Pilate could move Him to a compromising utterance to serve their own purpose.

Our Lord, we are told, ' knew their hypocrisy ' ; and the answer, regarded merely as a countermove to such tactics, was so conclusively effective as to surprise the plotters and put them to flight. For he had refused to declare against the tribute, and at the same time had given so clear an object-lesson on the reasonableness of payment, that His saying could not be ' laid hold of before the People ' as an utterance of unjustified timidity. But this aspect of the saying is very far from exhausting its significance. For it could not have been our Lord's motive merely to escape the dangerous dilemma involved in the question. He was not concerned to avoid trouble at any cost with the Roman authorities nor to maintain popularity with the crowd. In fact, all interpreters, eschatologist or otherwise, are

declare against the direct government of Rome, which of course had curtailed the power of the Herods.

agreed that He had come to Jerusalem with the sure anticipation of, if not the intention of courting, His abandonment to death at the hands of the Romans. And, as a matter of fact, with these unscrupulous opponents, the escape could only be for the moment: within a very short time both the charge that He had forbidden tribute was brought, and the crowds were persuaded to say 'Let him be crucified!'

(*b*) But what Jesus was concerned with was, not to be delivered to the Roman power on a *wrong issue*. He had to place religion in its true light before the secular power, when this should care to look, as a force compatible with the recognition of the just rights of government: He had to declare to the native rulers of His People 'the whole counsel of God' and show them that they really owed a duty to Gentile governors, whether they recognized it or not: and he desired that, if there was still time, the crowds of Palestine might be saved from the real 'perverters of the People' who were so soon to lead them into ruinous revolt against 'the things that are Caesar's'. That is why the question is dealt with on serious grounds and not evaded, as might have been done, had He only wished to avoid a trap. 'Why try ye me?' Why think to move me from the path of truth by the fear of man?—with the indication also, perhaps, that both the attraction of Messianism and the fear of Rome were still potential 'temptations' to Him, though they had been refused. Here is a question of political fact and right, not to be treated as an insincere shibboleth to ruin a personal foe. You are using Caesar's coinage, you asked for his direct sway.[1] Not only then is it 'permissible' for the religious man to pay tribute, but it is a *just due* (ἀπόδοτε) on the same footing as his duty to God.

[1] Cf. pp. 28 f. and 67.

The wording of the answer which we have just emphasized makes it not only an unmistakable pronouncement, at the moment, of the political relations of Christ's Ministry, but marks it as inaugurating the new attitude taken up towards the Empire by Christianity. The question is best translated, 'Is it permissible?' (ἔξεστιν;), for 'lawful' conveys the wrong impression that current Jewish opinion might conceivably have regarded payment to a heathen power as ideally right. Judaism, as it was, could never have made such an admission: the recognition of Rome could only be expedient as a temporary sufferance till the Almighty should restore the kingdom to Israel. Most striking and original, then, is the contrasted behest, 'Render as his due!' Besides being a rebuke to Jewish 'intransigence', it is clearly the fountain-head (as proved by the reproduction of the phraseology) of the new political philosophy laid down by St. Paul in Rom. xiii as to relations with the 'higher powers': 'there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God' (what a breach with Jewish ideas, apocalyptic or otherwise! compare also the conversation with Pilate ascribed to our Lord in John xix. 10 and 11 using the same word ἐξουσία). . . . 'For the rulers are not a terror to the good deed but to the evil. . . . We must submit not only because of their wrath but for conscience' sake. . . . *Render* (ἀπόδοτε) to all their *dues*, tribute to whom tribute is due,' &c. It was the great change of outlook that saved the religious idea from being crushed out in a hopeless and wrong-headed resistance to the due rights of worldly power, and that ensured the ultimate victory of Christianity over the pagan Empire. And so Justin Martyr (*Apol.* i. 17) quotes the Lord's word as

a defence of the loyalty of the Church in spite of persecution; and the great Chrysostom singles out the touches both in the Gospel passage and in Romans which constitute the significance of the new policy—'For this is not to *give* but to *render*, and this He shows both by the image and by the superscription' (Hom. lxx on St. Matt.). 'And this he is in all cases at pains to show, that it is not by way of favour that we obey them, but by way of debt. And in this way too he was more likely *to draw the governors who were unbelievers to religion*. . . . When then you show our common Master giving this in charge to all His, you will at once stop the mouths of those that malign us as revolutionists' (Hom. xxiii on Rom.).

And yet there are people, both learned and unlearned, to-day who would explain the power of Christianity in history chiefly by the belief of Jesus and His first disciples that they were 'at the bedside of a dying world'—to which presumably the rights of Caesar could not matter; or are careful to warn us that 'our common Master' never took sides on the political questions of His day! If He thus gave authority to the political reconciliation which in fact enabled the Christian Church to justify itself ultimately to the Empire, and which might have saved the Jewish commonwealth even then from extinction, surely it is more than pious fancy to seek in His earthly life for direct and conscious contributions both to the problems of that time and to questions of government and social welfare in all ages.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEATH OF CHRIST IN ITS CONSCIOUS RELATION TO CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

'Jesus the leader in, and consummator of, faith; who in consideration of the joy that lay before him endured the cross.'—Heb. xii. 2.

'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen.'—Ib. xi. 1.

'The dwellers in Jerusalem and their rulers failing to know him actually fulfilled the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath by giving a sentence: and then, because they had found no ground for putting him to death, asked of Pilate that he should be slain.'—Acts xiii. 27, 28.

'Fulfilled are ancient words to-day
Which David wove in faithful lay,
The news that through the folk should ring,
That God from tree doth reign as king.'

VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS.[1]

IF the interpretation of our Lord's public Ministry given in the last chapter is at all true to the facts, it supplies a very good reason why the two dominant parties at Jerusalem on political grounds would utterly refuse, and probably try to crush Him, should He make any claim to official recognition of His policy. The priestly aristocracy were opposed to *any* religious propaganda in Palestine, in the fear that it might lead

[1] The only excuse for setting aside the most familiar renderings of these lines (by Neale, or based on Neale) is a preference for connecting *nationibus* quite clearly with the telling rather than with the reigning, as in our version of the Psalm (xcvi. 10)—'Tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is king'—and as in the liturgical quotation, which may have been in Fortunatus' mind. Taking the common reading of the hymn, I interpret *dicendo* adjectivally and as agreeing with *carmine*. That 'from the tree' had somehow got into the LXX text in quite early Christian times is clear from references in Justin Martyr and Tertullian.

to political disturbance, while the scribes would be in deadly opposition to a relaxation of legalism suggesting that there was a flaw in their favourite theory of the political future, that it rested with the Almighty to intervene sooner or later on behalf of the Law as they expounded it. In this sense, at any rate, the political affinities of Jesus, as they would deem them, implied in His inexpedient enthusiasm for the conversion of Galilee or in the suggestions of a broadening attitude towards the Gentile world, must be given full weight in explaining the hostility of the Jewish leaders towards Him, both in the way of condemnation and of extenuation. Their failure, on the one hand, was more deserving of punishment than the theological blindness which the mere rejection of a true Messiah would imply—it was the refusal of a challenge to fulfil known responsibilities inconvenient to their politics ;[1] on the other hand, a consideration of their political outlook yields a more charitable explanation than if we ascribe to them a purely moral repulsion to Jesus, which we should have to do if His message had no bearing on the situation of national affairs.[2]

But our thesis requires more than the recognition of political hatred of our Lord on the part of those who brought about His death. It is necessary to show that this situation was present to His own mind, as involved in His mission, and as one of the elements determining the way in which His mission would finally be carried out, when the direct and public appeal failed. The political relations we have supposed to have been marked out at the Temptation for the Ministry of the 'Son of God', and accepted by Jesus, must be traced on through a last Great Refusal at a parting of

[1] See Chapter I, pp. 17, 18. [2] See Chapter V, p. 87.

the ways to their anticipated result in the death upon the Cross, which itself has a political import from the Divine standpoint far transcending the purpose of its inflicters. In other words, evidence for Christ's conscious facing of, and contribution to, the historical situation of the world at that time, will now be found in His decision to return to Jerusalem with the knowledge that He must die ; and in the deliberate purpose discernible through the Gospel record in His manner of accepting death, revealing the Cross as from one aspect a conscious policy alternative to the message of repentance which had been rejected ; though it is no less clear that this issue, humanly speaking, followed in the natural course of events from the rulers' antipathy to His teaching and was not forced on them by any desperate action on His part. To justify this explanation of the Death of our Lord by the political situation as present to His consciousness, we must examine in some detail:

1. The circumstances of the decision to return to Jerusalem.
2. The interaction of causes which brought about the condemnation of Jesus in the particular form that it took.

1. It has been already suggested in the exposition of the Temptation and of the salient features of the public Ministry that the Herodian policy and governments had a special attraction for our Lord. There may be significance, therefore, in the fact that the Gospel tradition brings in a mention of Herod Antipas, combined in the case of Mark and Matthew with the detailed story of his relations with the Baptist, by way of preface to the distinct movement of withdrawal and apparent change of policy that is indicated at this

stage of the narrative. (See Matt. xiv–xvi ; Mark vi. 14–ix. 1 ; Luke ix. 7–27.) Was it borne in afresh upon our Lord at this time, by hearing that Herod's interest was aroused in Him, perhaps also by this practical reminder of the heathenish side of the Idumaean princedoms revealed in the recent martyrdom of a ' just and holy ' prophet (Mark vi. 20), that the last and most alluring of the three avenues to earthly success was also forbidden ground to the ' Son of God '—that there was no legitimate alternative, even here within sight of the Gentile field which He so longed to enter, to the narrow way of the Cross—that the time had come to turn and meet that storm of opposition from ' His own ' which bade fair to drive Him away from all hope of national leadership to a career outside the limits of the Covenant People ?

In any case, whether we shall rightly trace in this section of the narrative the instruction of the disciples in the factors of a momentous and deliberate decision, or not, the undoubted fact of the return to the capital in sure anticipation that it meant death, is itself best explained by our supposition that our Lord's course was determined, among other things, by full attention to the political elements in the situation.

If He had not been conscious that His activities were such as to be politically inoffensive to a Herodian administration, but politically offensive to both parties in the Sanhedrin, why should He foresee that coming within the geographical limits of the latter's power would force the issue ? The suppression of a preacher of righteousness, apart from further implications, if it was to happen at all, was more likely to be Herod's work (as had been shown in the fate of the Baptist) than that of the official heads of the nation ; and, para-

doxical as this may seem for an ecclesiastical power, the position of the native rulers at Jerusalem was such that only a political bearing in any movement would make it worth their while to exercise their authority: Herod was free from Jewish sentiment and might favour or penalize what opinions he pleased, but the Judaeans would have no interest in the excommunication of any native teacher, unless compelled to it by considerations of the effect he might have on their political hopes—for by this time the one question that absorbed all their energies as rulers was how to keep the way open for recovering independence, whether by Sadducaic craft or through God's faithfulness to a legally righteous people. Thus, granted that the terms of His vocation demanded that He should make His challenge in the official centre of the nation's life, any one who accurately gauged the tendency of Jesus' mission and the governmental outlook of the Sanhedrin might on purely natural grounds have foreseen at least conflict in Jerusalem. On the other hand, the upholders of the eschatological interpretation—the view that the main motive in the latter part of the story is the forcing on of the Kingdom by the voluntary death of the Son of Man without any further outlook into the present or future than that of Jewish apocalyptic—fail, at least in my opinion, in this sphere of historical probability. The 'supernatural' is present in the mission, and therefore should be taken account of in the events, but it is a higher synthesis which can see the Divine purpose working itself out in 'natural' motives and causes as well; and we may fairly ask here why our Lord, on the eschatologist hypothesis, should regard the going up to Jerusalem as the sure way for bringing about His own death, apart from a deep appraisal of the

trend of national affairs and the consciousness of fundamental divergence from current native opinion—just as in the last week's events in the city we shall look in vain for any artificial act on His part to cause the Crucifixion, apart from the implications of His whole teaching which we suppose to have been obvious to the authorities.

But it may be replied to this, both by 'eschatologist' interpreters and those who for any reason deny our Lord's interest in the political situation, that His course was confessedly determined by the teaching of prophecy and particularly by the ideal of the Suffering Servant depicted in Deutero-Isaiah. (See e. g. the striking saying, Luke xxii. 37, where the use of the Hebrew form in quotation testifies to its authenticity.) But we still should find, if possible, some reason which would suggest the applicability of that vein of prophetic teaching, and also a general harmony between that vein and the supposed dominant motive of Christ's Ministry. The latter consideration in the case of Deutero-Isaiah, surely, makes strongly for the view that His message was one of humanization and extension, and therefore in relation with practical policies: for if ever there was a proclamation in the Old Testament of hope for the Gentiles to be worked out through the action and suffering of God's Chosen Servant Israel (leaving aside any definite Messianic application), it is to be found in Isa. xl–lxvi. How can it at the same time be held that the picture of the Servant, containing such express definitions of function as xlii. 1–6 and xlix. 6, was a guiding influence with our Lord, and yet that extension to the Gentiles was excluded from His conscious purpose?

But a further confirmation of our view, that attention to the historical situation must be presupposed in

combination with the guidance of prophecy, emerges when we look at the predictions and especially the great O.T. passage, the use of which by our Lord is generally admitted, and which is put forward by some 'eschatological' interpreters as a sufficient explanation of His anticipation of death. To begin with, we know that in current ideas Isa. liii was not interpreted Messianically (cf. the eunuch's perplexity, Acts viii. 27–34). If Jesus, then, was absorbed in the apocalyptic hopes of the time and would look for the guidance of His course only in what had been revealed about Messianic *dénouements*, it is likely that the more obvious foreshadowings of a King's death for his people in Zech. xiii. 7,[1] and perhaps in Dan. ix. 26, xi. 22, which did not require a novel interpretation from His own insight into the situation, would have been the determining scriptural factor in His decision (if such there was) rather than Deutero-Isaiah. Yet how vague these really are, and how inadequate as the sole justification for courting death apart from a deep reflection on the tendency of events! And on the other hand, if the consensus of Christian interpretation from the very first establishes a special prominence for the Isaiah passage in the scripture proofs 'that thus it must be', what is involved? It needed a weighing of the situation, one would think, transcending the apocalyptic outlook, to make a new application of what current opinion had not connected with Messiah or the 'Son of Man': and this surmise is confirmed when we note the feature of the prophecy which, so far as our knowledge goes, gave it its significance to our Lord

[1] Quoted by Himself according to Mark xiv. 27 and Matt. xxvi. 31 in language independent of the LXX; cf. also Matt. xxi. 5 and John xix. 37.

Himself. It is not so much the persecution of the Lord's Servant, nor even its vicarious efficacy, that illustrates for Him the approaching tragedy, as the strange alienation from Him of the official nation, even (as it appeared) of God himself, and His punishment as a heinous law-breaker (see the meaning of the Hebrew word translated ' transgressors '—*cum sceleratis* Vulg.). For the only authentic quotation of Isa. liii. 12 in the Gospels (Luke xxii. 37) has nothing to do with the historical coincidence of the two robbers, but is a warning description to the disciples of a complete reversal that was about to take place in the situation, beyond anything contained in their ideas or experience of Messianic hardship. They had learned the happiness of trusting in God for the provision of material wants while they sought first the Kingdom—they thought they were ready to go both to prison and death in their Master's company and in the cause of a coming Kingdom ; but soon they would have to face something new in the annals of God's servants, to be branded as the followers of a criminal ! And how could the fulfilment of this aspect of the prophecy be so confidently foreseen unless by One who had given the fullest attention to the political tendencies of the time ? The picture of the suffering Servant thrust out to death by the Nation as a ' transgressor ' was the divine confirmation of what by this time was to be anticipated on human grounds from the politicians at Jerusalem, that they would prostitute their ecclesiastical authority to the exigencies of the moment. It was likely that the Sadducees, whose only religion was an expedient temporizing with Rome, and the Pharisees, who had actually welcomed direct Imperial government as more favourable to their political theory, would not

scruple solemnly to condemn a faithful Israelite as an offender against the Law of God, nor even to contrive a charge which would make him amenable to the Roman courts and Roman punishment,[1] if so they could more safely and effectively rid themselves of what they thought an immediate political danger. This was the peculiarity of the historical situation, the particular climax of national perversity, which made possible for the first time the fulfilment of that strange vision of ancient days—of the true Israel in Jehovah's service forfeiting, to all appearance, even Jehovah's favour, officially an outlaw (ἄνομος) from its own community, which thus sacrificed the national Ideal to the will of the national oppressor. How the historical results, also, of the Crucifixion—the impression on the Gentile world, the remorse of true Israelites on recognizing the effect of their own error—whether consciously intended by our Lord or no, corresponded with the other details of this prophecy, will be made clear in another chapter.

One more proof of insight into the political probabilities of the situation may be adduced here—the metaphor of ' taking up the cross ' in the discourse of Mark viii. 34–38 and ‖, occurring just after the first clear announcement of the end.[2] This indication that a Roman death was foreseen is all the stronger because it is not a definite prediction such as might have been added to the tradition after the event, like the unsupported mention of crucifixion in Matt. xx. 19. As an arresting picture of Messianic tribulation it would fix itself in the disciples' memory, while it would hardly

[1] The possibility of a Jewish death-penalty, which would make the actual procedure taken a gratuitous surrender of native rights into Gentile hands, will be discussed in an Appendix to this Chapter.

[2] The occurrence of the phrase also in Matt. x. 38 is probably one of the anachronisms of that Gospel.

have been imagined afterwards for the purposes of embellishment, for it is not applied by the Lord to Himself, and would have sufficient proverbial meaning for Galileans of that age not to imply an actual crucifixion.[1] Yet, in the mouth of One whom we suppose to have weighed the historical situation, how significant the phrase at that juncture, particularly if the cross was not the *necessary* sequel of national rejection, but only a probability of the political tendencies at Jerusalem!

Having shown that the undoubted expectation of a fatal issue is best explained by the supposition of a careful attention to the national circumstances of the time, we must as briefly as possible run over some indications in the Gospel narrative which seem to connect our Lord's decision to return to Jerusalem with the inner scheme of His mission as it has been viewed in this Essay, and with its political attractions and repulsions.

Immediately after the mention of Herod, already referred to, we are told of the call of the disciples into retirement, suggesting that at this stage leisure to think and learn was of more importance for them than continued achievement on the lines of public ministration. Then occurs the feeding of the 5,000, which, whatever view we take of its historicity, is clearly an important turning-point in the Gospel tradition, and stands there for its significance as an object-lesson to the Twelve rather than as a mighty work of the Master —it is their own assistance in it which is chiefly remembered in every detail, and so far as it is regarded in its effect on the crowds, that effect has, in Christ's purpose, to be counteracted at once (Mark vi. 45). What was that significance? That 'they had not

[1] v. Workman, *Pers. in the E. Church*, p. 21 n.

understood at the time the miracle of the loaves took place' [1] argued peculiar lack of spiritual discernment; while its inner meaning, had it been grasped, was decisive enough to have prepared them for a hitherto unsuspected mode of existence in their Master, independent of material laws (Mark vi. 51–2). The same 'hardening of the heart' (attributed to the Apostles only in connexion with this subject in the N.T.), with further illustration from prophetic phrase, is charged against them by our Lord Himself (Mark viii. 14–21), because they had missed the meaning of the details in the two miracles of feeding, and therefore either could not understand, or were not interested in, the instruction about the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod.

In this latter passage I believe St. Mark (rather than the Matthaean Gospel) to have preserved the key not only to the meal in the wilderness but to the whole inner purpose of our Lord in this section of the story. Whether the discussion about lack of provisions was suggested by the remark about leaven (as definitely St. Matthew) and thus betokened a literalness of mind hardly (one would think) to be expected in the disciples, or was a coincidence revealing a general absorption in the needs of the moment diverting attention from the seriousness of the crisis (an interpretation compatible with the Marcan form of the story)—the earnest expression of disappointment attested by St. Mark is ill accounted for by a failure to convey the idea of 'doctrine' under the metaphor of leaven (Matt. xvi. 12)! Nor is the imputation of 'little faith' (ib. 8) germane to the situation, for the disciples were not taught to expect miraculous provision of their own wants. No! it is

[1] So Dr. Rutherford (*Ep. to Romans*, p. xiv) interprets the preposition—*ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄρτοις*.

a deplorable blindness to the whole import of their recent experience that is in question, and that import was to be found not in the mere manifestation of divine power but in some principle revealed by the actual *details of numbers and circumstance* (Mark viii. 19–20, partly blurred by compression in the Matthaean account).

The particularity of our Lord's questions here confirms what might already be inferred from the unanimity of the four Gospels in recording the exact details of the former miracle—that it was the details which mattered ; and the comparison of the numbers and other circumstances on the two occasions brought out by this dialogue is just what serves to emphasize a principle or principles underlying the facts. That the divine increase is not governed by the material supply but by the human need was sufficiently taught by the feeding of 5,000 folk with five loaves ; but the lesson is made clearer, if by a comparison you can recall that those five loaves went further than seven did on a similar occasion when the need was less : again, the superfluity of God's bounty is relative only to our diligence in and means of collecting it—the fragments were neither more nor less than the disciples took the trouble to fill their baskets with ; and this truth is confirmed if the same thing happened when a different number and a different kind of receptacles for the bounty was at hand—the twelve κόφινοι and the seven σπυρίδες were alike filled.[1]

[1] We do not know the relative capacity of the two kinds of basket, else further significance might be found in the numbers of these. e. g. only if the σπυρίς was three times as large as the κόφινος would the overplus on the two occasions bear the correct proportion *by material laws* to the relative resources of supply. If of five loaves, after feeding 5,000, twelve basketfuls could by ordinary rules

Thus, in our view, the teaching intended to be conveyed by every particular in the multiplication of the bread is the special truth implied also in the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the manna—that God's ways of achievement and extension are independent of existing resources, limited only by the need and the capacity to make use of them. So regarded we can see how it illustrates, and is illustrated by, the reference to the *leaven* of the Pharisees and that of Herod, for leaven is the sour dough from old supplies which is ordinarily necessary to make the most of the new baking. The Israelites had to do without it (with symbolic meaning) at the Passover ; and Christ is here warning His followers against certain ready resources, apparently the only avenues of progress, which nevertheless He is renouncing and they must renounce. Of one such avenue He had but just now been reminded once more, when the Pharisees came and clamoured for 'a sign from heaven' (Mark viii. 11–13). It was the old temptation (*πειράζοντες αὐτόν*) to yield to the Messianistic theory characteristic of that party and purchase

'remain over and above', then of seven loaves divided among 4,000, the equivalent of twenty-one basketfuls of the same size should be left. But, allowing any less difference than three to one in the size of the receptacle, the overplus is considerably *less* where the relative resources are *more*, which might be intended as a further indication that the bounty was entirely outside the laws of material supply. One is tempted, by observing the exact form of our Lord's questions, to infer that this *was* the particular enforcement of the main truth that He tried to elicit then, though in our present state of knowledge it can only be precarious conjecture. From this point of view the curious might find satisfaction in noting an inverse *proportion* even in the overriding of natural law ! If the two kinds of basket were of the same capacity, the decrease in the number of mouths that had to be fed from one loaf made an almost exactly corresponding decrease in the superfluity ($\frac{5000}{8} : \frac{4000}{7} :: 12 : 6\frac{6}{7}$). But there is no need to mar with scholastic fancies the legitimate inferences deduced in the text.

an immediate success as the Messianic king of their dreams designated by a striking manifestation of power. (We may notice how this incident is represented in the Fourth Gospel by the dialogue of John vi. 30–3, closely following the miracle.) And that it still had its attraction is perhaps shown by the 'groaning of spirit' with which the decisive refusal was given. But there is another dangerous 'leaven' which might in the alternative be adopted to win a temporary triumph—the method of Herod (or of the Herodians, as some MSS. give in Mark viii. 15),[1] the policy of compromise with heathenism in order to play a great part in the Gentile world: that was awaiting its final renunciation by our Lord at Caesarea Philippi, after which there only remained the path of loyalty and death, leading, however, to the true victory.

So, in this short discourse, as it is preserved by the earliest Gospel—marked out as specially significant both by the manner of its utterance and by the evident intention that it should stand in line with the main drift of the disciples' initiation into the Master's purpose at this time—we have a disclosure of that alternative path which by its attractions gave poignancy to the way of the cross, but by its implications made the course taken an imperative act of loyalty to national vocation and of reasoned obedience to God. It was the opportunity of a Gentile mission, leaving Israel to

[1] The mention of an emphatically distinct Herodian leaven, peculiar to St. Mark, could hardly be a later embellishment; it is another instance in this section of the true situation being preserved by him, while the later compiler (Matt. xiv. 1–12), apparently missing the significance, reads 'and Sadducees' simply instead of 'and the leaven of Herod'; he correspondingly reinforces the immediately preceding deputation with Sadducees—an unlikely coalition at this stage when 'asking for signs' was the matter in hand in all seriousness.

its fate—a new departure which might even seem to be forced on Jesus by the persistent hostility of the native religionists—that He was turning away from at the present juncture ; and it was this decision in particular that found justification in the Feeding Miracle with its revelation of the Divine power of increase outside human probabilities and expedients. The connexion of thought is remarkably confirmed in two other passages of the Gospels. When the Syro-Phoenician cries for a share in Messianic bounty, the disciples see no reason for exclusiveness, if by granting her request He can get rid of the annoyance (Matt. xv. 23) ; but our Lord, partly no doubt to draw out the woman's faith, but partly also, surely, to make His chosen followers face the real depth of the problem, urges this same analogy of bread supply with which He had before tried to open their eyes to the necessity of unexpected forces and conditions if His work was to have its full scope. The immediately preceding discussion about defilement indicates a suspicion on the part of the Pharisees that the little band had leanings towards Gentile freedom at this time, even if our Lord's great saying in reply was not a conscious demolition in principle of 'the middle wall of partition' between Jew and Gentile ;[1] and St. Matthew at least records hereabouts a general healing in such terms as imply heathen surroundings—'they glorified the God of Israel' (Matt. xv. 29–31). We cannot suppose, therefore, that 'Let the children first be filled' represents a normal and expected attitude of Jesus ; rather is it a *caveat* to the disciples against rushing to a goal without knowing the way or conditions of success—perhaps even the statement for Himself of

[1] Cf. *ante*, p. 93.

one side of the dilemma which was to find its solution only in the Death and Resurrection. Apart from the way that God is revealing, to feed the pets is on the face of it to deprive the children, just as before the miracle 'two hundred pennyworth of bread' would not have been 'sufficient that every one might take a little'; and the question had to be faced, *how* was the Gentile world to be gathered in without disloyalty to the prior claim of the neglected sheep living under the Law? Were polytheists to receive the favour of God, before full satisfaction had come to the true worshippers? The marvellous faith and good humour of the woman's reply relaxed perforce for a moment the insistence of this problem, while it was an earnest of the welcome which heathendom would give to the Gospel when not only 'crumbs' but a seat at the table was prepared. But the way of renunciation had to be trodden first.

A third passage which shows the connexion of the food symbol with the question of extension to the Gentiles is John xii. 20–33, the discourse arising out of the visit of the Greeks. Here the process by which the increase of man's food even in the natural order comes about ('Except the grain of wheat fall into the earth and die . . .'), is used to illustrate the truth that the glory of achievement among the Gentiles comes only through suffering, death, and resurrection. If, as it is reasonable to think, this troubling of Jesus' soul is the substitute selected by this Gospel for the Agony in Gethsemane,[1] it would suggest that the essential bitterness of death to our Lord was thought by some to be that He was

[1] Professor Stalker, *Life of Jesus Christ* (large type ed., pp. 188–97), connects the two incidents in an illuminating section, 'Jesus in presence of death'.

leaving behind the prospect of a Gentile mission under earthly conditions. However this may be, our interpretation of the Miraculous Feeding as a revelation intended to explain and justify the rejection of Herodian methods which were the last remaining alternative to death, fits in well with the implication of resurrection-life which always seems to hover round this symbolical act in the Gospel tradition: in all the four we have the walking on the water, and in the Synoptists a little later on the Transfiguration; while the Fourth Gospel makes the incident the occasion of a discourse on the Bread of Life and on the revival of 'all that He hath given me', and by emphasizing the Passover season seems to make the miracle a foretaste of the Great Passover which was to be enacted at Jerusalem. The same symbolic act of 'the breaking of the bread' with blessing or thanksgiving expounds for the Apostles the inner meaning of the now nearly approaching crisis as a covenant-sacrifice 'for the benefit of many' (Mark xiv. 22–5, Matt. xxvi. 26–9); and it clinches the proof of the Master having risen to two disciples who probably were not present at the Last Supper and were thus having their eyes opened retrospectively to the significance of the Feeding Miracle.[1] It was the existence of a new life from the dead, God's method of extension, that could alone explain why Jesus should turn away from such inviting opportunities as surrounded Him in the Gentile border-lands of the country where He had been brought up.

And so we come to envisage the true setting of the 'parting of the ways' at Caesarea Philippi.

The divine expedient which was to meet the politico-religious crisis of the age hinged on the rejection by the

[1] Luke xxiv. 30–5; Professor Bacon, op. cit., p. 78.

Jews of their own Messiah, by which the kernel of the True Religion would be freed, as the result of their own wilfulness, from the husk of a false and rotten nationalism. It was necessary, therefore, before our Lord moved forward to the challenge which was to produce this issue, that His closest followers, whose task would be to witness to the rejection and its meaning, should be brought to a conscientious and definite assurance of His identity and of the truth of His claim, an assurance, also, that could stand the test of temporary disappointment. To this end was directed, doubtless, the choice of the Twelve for intimate companionship, and especially their withdrawal at this stage to comparative quietness and leisure in long tours with Him through the borderlands. The crucial confession is at length drawn from them through a call to examine their own settled judgement of what their discipleship meant (Mark viii. 29 and ‖), not just after any striking manifestation of power, nor by any sudden appeal to their loyalty. It was no ordinary human authority or line of argument that could supply the basis of such a superstructure, only a conviction of the conscience and spirit (cf. Matt. xvi. 17–19 with Gal. i. 16, 17).

But if it was necessary that the Messiahship of Jesus should be established on true grounds within the inner circle of His following, it was equally necessary that this belief should not be proclaimed so as to prejudice the free choice of the rulers to accept or reject the call of God. With such a claim publicly put forward, either He might be received to a position of leadership on false grounds as the Messiah of current ideals, and no moral choice would have been made; or else through fear of popular excitement the authorities would be justified in not giving a hearing to His appeal.

Hence the stern prohibition against speaking to any one of this matter (Mark viii. 30 and ‖).

The great confession of faith being obtained, Jesus begins at once to prepare the disciples in plain language (Mark viii. 32), no longer by hint and symbolism, for the unexpected fate which the Messiah is to encounter, and to which the first step is a departure from present safety to Jerusalem, where His enemies are strongest (Matt. xvi. 21). Whereupon St. Peter, in the exaltation of established faith, and dazzled with the prospect of a great career opening out for them where they were farthest from the centre of opposition and freest to go their own way under the best of the Herodian governments, cannot keep silence at such extravagant weakness and unnecessary surrender of success! 'God help thee, Master! never shall this be' (Matt. xvi. 22). And in those words there opened out once more the vision of the last tempting alternative to the Cross. There is no longer any need to win recognition of His vocation in faithfulness to the Covenant. Has He not been acknowledged as the Christ? Why not then seize the kingdoms of the world at once by entering into Gentile life with all its freedom and splendour . . . yes, and its white marble temples in honour of Augustus like that on yonder hill with which Herod had paid homage to the spirit of Paganism? 'All these things will I give thee, *if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*' How clearly does the situation stand out in this its second enactment—not only in the agonized repetition of the 'Get thee behind me, Satan', but in the wording of the subsequent discourse on the sanity of self-sacrifice, which seems to reflect in every detail the inner struggle which He has gone through! 'What doth it profit a man to *gain the whole world* and forfeit his very

being ? ' . . . For over against the ' glory ' which Satan offers there is a coming of the Son of Man to be reckoned with, in ' the glory of His Father and with the holy angels ' ; and the ' kingdoms of the world ' so offered sink into insignificance before the immediate nearness of ' the kingdom of God come with power ' (Mark viii. 32—ix. 1 and ‖).

2. Thus the supposition that Christ's Ministry in its later phase had a conscious relation to the historical position of affairs in the world as it was, has been borne out by the way in which the end was so clearly anticipated, and by the indications that He felt the attraction of an alternative to the path of death and deliberately chose this latter as affording the truer way to victory : the return to Jerusalem was no blind act of eschatologist fanaticism, when the particular manner of death expected can be shown to depend essentially on the circumstances of the time, and when the disciples were so carefully prepared to find in their Master's decision an abiding principle of God's working in the interest of the Gentile world.

The same conclusion is suggested when we follow the course of events which led up to the Crucifixion, and note how remarkably our Lord's attitude in the capital, while in no way forcing the action of the authorities nor impairing their freedom of choice, combines with their natural hostility towards Him to produce a result of especial significance for the need of the world at that crisis. On His part there is no defiance of the native government beyond the call to fulfil the national responsibilities. Though He enters the city in such a way as to fulfil a Messianic prophecy, thus giving an opportunity to the faithful to recognize His divine commission, He does not use this situation to stir up

a Messianistic movement, but leaves the crowds the same evening and retires into the country with the Twelve (Mark xi. 11)—a strange abandonment of occasion, had the object been to force on the Kingdom. The successive challenges or replies to the rulers are all directed against, and serve to show up, just those unfaithfulnesses to Divine requirement to which our Lord's Ministry had always been a rebuke: there is no fresh theological claim till the admission forced on Him before the Sanhedrin that He is the Christ, the bearing of which will be seen presently. The appeal according to the Synoptic account opens with the demonstration in the Court of the Gentiles, followed by a denunciation of the 'Robber' policy which had long characterized the official heads of the Nation.[1] This was an outburst of religious zeal that could not be complained of either as an offence against the Law or as disturbing the public peace; it was only an exposure of the irreligious government of the aristocrats, and it was from a selfish fear for their own political position that the deliberate hostility of the Sanhedrin is here stated to have taken its rise—'they sought how they might destroy him; for they were afraid of him because all the multitude were strongly impressed by his teaching' (Mark xi. 18). Similarly His manner of meeting their counter-challenge is no unreasoned defiance; the question about John the Baptist is designed to unmask to them this same absorption in political expediency which has incapacitated them from judging any religious appeal conscientiously or by any test except the interest of their own dignity (Mark xi. 27–33). Again, the Parable of the Vineyard was an unmistakable *warning* against the persistent denial

[1] Cf. pp. 20–27 of this Essay.

of known responsibility and the terrible apostasy to which it is even now leading. Our Lord was not forcing them to kill Him, nor giving them any handle against Him apart from their own wilful deafness to God's call. Along the same line there is the serious teaching about the Tribute, which has been already discussed; the sorrowful rebuke of the unspiritual Sadducees (Mark xii. 18–27); the welcome of the sensible Scribe, who understands the ethical nature of God's demands (Mark xii. 34); the suggestion that the promise of Messiah is something greater than the re-establishment of a native kingship (ib. 35–7); the warning of the people against the immorality of an external Legalism, and an object-lesson in the true meaning of religious sacrifice (ib. 38–44)—all being but repetitions in the citadel of His People of the characteristic message with which He had been entrusted.

Thus the 'public policy of Jesus Christ', as we have ventured to name it, which loyalty to His vocation compelled Him to offer for the acceptance of the official heads of the nation, was brought face to face with the hopes and fears of the dominant parties, under no confusing cloud of Messianic claim or fanatical defiance such as would have justified official interference. Every day He was 'with them in the temple *teaching*, and' they did not seize Him (Mark xiv. 49 and ‖). It was a grief to Him that when the time came He should be arrested by a band of men, as if He had been in any way a danger to the public peace! (ib.). In this way, negatively, the simple adherence to His ethico-political message was a contributing cause to one feature of His rejection, viz. that no ground can possibly be alleged for the Sanhedrin's action except that they were determined to refuse that message. The condemnation

of Jesus stands for all time as the political murder of One whose only crime was an appeal for national reform, which the men in power did not want.

But there are more positive indications in our Lord's attitude at the end, of a conscious purpose interacting with the political hatred of the rulers to bring about His condemnation, and that in a form which was to have important bearings on the future. Though He did not force events, He accepted them in obedience to prophecy and His Father's will; for, from the purely human standpoint, there would seem to be no necessity to return to the city for the Last Supper, nor to go to Gethsemane where He was known to resort with His disciples. He might have escaped, if it had been only 'a question of what I will' (τί ἐγὼ θέλω, Mark xiv. 36). And in the trial before the members of the Sanhedrin, does it not seem as if His silence was not merely sarcastic but contributed something to the special character of the proceedings? By not attempting to rebut the false charge about the Temple and whatever other accusations were made, He left it to them to admit absolutely on their own showing that there was no case for the prosecution, that He was strictly righteous before the Law; so all irrelevant issues were disposed of in the most effective way, leaving only the real issue which they wanted to settle, though it was no question for judicial decision at all. They wanted to refuse and discredit the Messiahship which they suspected He was bringing them. Therefore, abandoning all pretext of offence against the Law, they rushed to the point. Does He claim to be the Christ? Solemnly adjured by the highest ecclesiastical authority of His People, He will do no other than tell them the truth. He had not put forward the claim Himself; but they

by merely asking the question showed that their consciences conceded it. 'I am' (Mark), 'It was thou that saidst it' (Matt.), 'Ye say that I am' (Luke). His silence and His speech had alike ensured the achievement of their real purpose (significant beyond anything they dreamed of)—that He should be officially cast out for claiming to be Christ and for nothing else.

But by giving scope to their intention thus far He had helped to involve them in a further corollary. The only condemnation in Jewish Law that could be built upon a claim to Messiahship was for blasphemy on the supposition that the claim was a false one: and to this conclusion they at once proceeded, without seeing the weakness of the position as regards the carrying out of the sentence. The penalty for blasphemy was public stoning, and there is reason for believing that that was the result at first contemplated. I have argued in an Appendix to this chapter that there was no settled restriction by the Roman Government of the Sanhedrin's right to put to death according to native law; and the 'Gospel of Nicodemus', which has been thought by some scholars to embody an early legendary 'Acts of Pilate', perhaps preserves a true tradition of the situation in this imaginary dialogue:

'The Jews say to Pilate . . . he that blasphemeth God is to be stoned with stones.

Pilate says to them: Do you take him, and punish him in whatever way you please. The Jews say to Pilate: We wish that he be crucified.'[1]

In fact they were in this difficulty, that though (according to our view) they had no Roman prohibition to fear, to stone anybody merely for claiming to be the

[1] Orr, *N. T. Apocryphal Writings* (Temple Apocrypha), p. 48, Tischendorf, *Ev. Apocrypha*, p. 222, (*Ev. Nic.* i. 4. 3–4).

Christ, without any obvious indication that he was not so,[1] was not likely to secure the support of the crowds who were eager for a Christ. Therefore, in order to carry out their hostile purpose in the safest and, as always, the most 'expedient' way, they decided (probably at the early morning council) *to abandon a cherished symbol of Jewish autonomy*,[2] and have Jesus tried anew by the Roman administration and put to death for a Roman crime, perhaps also with the idea that the public shame of crucifixion would be the most effective ruin to overtake the cause which they hated. Certainly the Synoptic account of the Trial before Pilate has no trace of any claim that Jesus should die for offence against the native Law; while the Fourth Gospel, on a careful reading, lends its support to our view of the significance of His abandonment to the Roman authority. The whole Jewish trial is omitted by this writer, as if in contempt for proceedings which had proved useless for the practical purpose in view: then the Jews are represented as evading the question, when asked for a charge against the Prisoner (John xviii. 29, 30)—they are afraid of betraying at first the 'question of their Law', which the Governor would scent under the accusation that Jesus claimed to be 'King of the Jews': Pilate distinctly offers them a free hand to deal with the case according to their law: and it is, surely, their petulant or fawning *statement*—'We are not allowed to put any one to death'—not the true fact of the case, that is regarded by this writer as a remarkable fulfilment of 'the word of Jesus which He

[1] Cf. the account of the matter given in Acts xiii. 28, placed as a motto at the head of this chapter, and the detailed discussion in the Appendix.

[2] Cf. the prolonged wrangle over St. Paul's case as described in the Appendix.

spake, signifying by what manner of death He was about to die ' (ib. 31, 32). The fear that they may yet be baffled draws from them for a moment the actual theory they held as to their rights, which for policy's sake they had denied, but which was really part of the hold they had on the Governor, who had at least to take account of an official native demand of this kind, though he required some ground in Roman principles of administration on which to act (xix. 6, 7) ; but the significant surrender has been made, and having handed over a Messianic claimant to Roman trial and punishment they may well cry with unconscious irony, ' We have no king except Caesar ! ' (ib. 15).

Thus the politico-religious infatuation of the Chosen People given free course, yet (as it seems) observed and consciously controlled by its Victim, issued in this curious result, at the same time desired and undesired : there being no offence, on their own showing, which could be alleged against Him as a transgressor of the Law, the official heads of the nation *asked* Him for that Messianic claim which was the professed end and object of their political theories, and made the confession of *that* the one ground for solemn rejection ! Further, in fear for their political position, they abjured their national right to make their judgement effective ; and of their own accord handed over their Messiah, the essential symbol of their independence, to the extreme vengeance of the Gentile power.

The same sort of irony is discernible in the proceedings before the Roman Governor, suggesting that our Lord took full cognizance of the Gentile attitude towards the claims of Jewish religion and was helping on the real intolerance of the Empire to a *reductio ad absurdum,* which was the parallel of the Jewish

apostasy. The Romans' blindness to spiritual factors made them see only the bugbear of a native kingship in all claims for the independent exercise of religion; though the anti-social spirit of Judaism and its want of appreciation of the humanitarian value of the Empire was some excuse for this attitude of suspicion. Pilate, then, receiving a prisoner on the charge of making Messianic claims, immediately puts the question, 'Are you the king of this people?'—a survival of their old theocratic independence, which cannot now be allowed? Jesus in effect replies, 'I have made no claim endangering the government—it is your suggestion—but you can act on it if you like, for I will not deny that I am their king'—thus giving free play to the unspiritual Imperial method of judging all things in heaven and earth by governmental interests. On the other hand, when the false charges of Messianistic disaffection are made, He is silent, leaving it to the trained Roman sense of justice and instinct of sympathy with humanitarian ideals to conclude on its own principles that there is no just ground for imperial interference, rather that here is the sort of religion which the Empire could approve. However, the charge has been made—it will not do for a procurator to let off One who has admitted that He is a petty king: unless, perhaps, where there is obviously no danger to Roman interests, he may, by doing so, gratify the native populace's feeling for a representative of their old royal family and thus prevent any complaints reaching Tiberius either of his severity or laxness. When, to Pilate's surprise, this opportunity for administrative tact escapes him, nay! when the rulers hint that complaints *will* go to Rome if he does not do what they want, he finds himself obliged to release the violent bravo—typifying the real danger to

society in Judaea—' whom they desired ', and to proceed on purely administrative grounds (for he had found no judicial case for alleged acts of disaffection) to execute the inoffensive Prisoner on the charge, confessed, of being a native king.[1] The Imperial blindness to the true rights of religious conscience (the claim to be controlled ultimately only by a Divine Kingdom, while working in all things lawful under human government) applied the last argument of Rome against national turbulence—crucifixion—to just that Person who had taught and shown that loyalty to ' the powers that be ' was quite compatible with Jewish faith, and so had removed the excuse for regarding Judaism as in essence an anti-social clog to good government.

We can see in this way, even through the details of political circumstance and historical event, how the real problem of the crisis, ' the sin of the world ', was working itself out under Divine control in two streams to the point of nullification. The perverted religious patriotism of the Jews had led them to the point of surrendering their own Messiah to Gentile oppression : the pagan limitations of the Gentile work for humanity had allowed the truest Friend of mankind to be sacrificed to the anti-social spite of a narrow nationalism.

But the crowning irony of the situation was that already in the moment of apparent success the ' haters of the Lord ' had made an unconditional surrender in spite of themselves. For in each case one word of the King Himself drew forth the admission of His sovereignty in the very processes by which it was designed

[1] It has been often pointed out how this procedure foreshadowed the method ultimately adopted against the Christians—not particular charges, but the admission of the Name.

to annihilate it. On the only evidence of Jesus' 'I am', the Jews handed Him over to Pilate as Messiah: on the only evidence of His 'Thou sayest it', Pilate crucified Him as the King of the Jews and proclaimed the fact 'in Hebrew, in Latin, in Greek' (John xix. 20). The Divine Kingship was for the first time truly claimed by human lips, and at once in this strange manner conceded.

How this royal control of hostile forces 'took away the sin of the world', and provided redemption especially in the politico-religious sphere of human history, we shall attempt to show in a final chapter.

EPILOGUE

'Ye know nothing nor do ye consider that it is your advantage that one man should die for the sake of the People and not the whole nation perish. But this he said not of himself, but being high-priest that year he prophesied how Jesus was about to die for the nation's sake, and not for the nation's sake alone, but in order also that the children of God which were scattered abroad might be brought together in one.'—St. John xi. 50–2.

Our purpose in the preceding pages has been to show the relation of Christ's earthly Ministry to a particular crisis in the history of the world, in which the clash of political forces and aspirations bade fair to bring disaster upon the religious future of mankind through the extinction of the national faith of the Jews. The contending ideas or motives which presaged this ruin were more fundamental than their political expression; they summed up, indeed, so far as they were wrong, 'the sin of the world' which is found in all ages, in the company alike of religious knowledge and of the ignorance of religion, obstructing the will of God. But it was through political aims and theories that, to the outside observer, human wilfulness appeared just then to make hopeless the progress of true religion—on the one side the great governmental ambition of Rome, that would listen to no spiritual authority in limitation of its absolute control, on the other the selfish bigotry of Judaism, which more and more identified the nation with a policy of obstinate intransigence. That is why a full belief in the Incarnation seems to require for its support that we should find in the record of Christ's Ministry some points of contact with these political

factors in the situation ; and, unless the present study has been seriously wrong, there is sufficient evidence that in the conscious scheme of our Lord's mission there was at least *included* an appeal to the forces which were converging to conflict in the political sphere. To the dynastic selfishness of Sadducaism, to the Pharisaic policy of ' tempting God ', He opposed an example of what the official nation should have been doing to meet the Gentile world half-way—the duty of a humane evangelization avoiding, at the same time, any compromise with paganism : to the Roman's intolerant fear of spiritual claims He held up religion in its true aspect as a beneficent force compatible with the Empire's own humanitarian ideals and ready to recognize the just rights of the governing power and ' render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's '.

That this appeal failed of any direct result either in the immediate conversion of the ruling forces or in averting the Fall of Jerusalem, is matter of history. After the brief experiment of restoring nominal independence to the Jews under Herod Agrippa I, quickly abandoned as it doubtless was owing to that monarch's leanings in the direction of a real religious freedom, the unspiritual tactlessness of the governors and the growing turbulence of the People acting out the political theories of their leaders were in about equal measure responsible for the revolt which could have but one conclusion. In all appearance, but forty years after the Crucifixion, the final disaster had come, and there was no more hope of Israel as a nation becoming the religious leader of the world.

Yet, also as matter of history, the worst effect of a disastrous conflict had not been realized. It cannot be denied that, by the time that the national indepen-

dence of the Chosen Race had succumbed to the fire and sword, the essential truths which had been entrusted to that nation—its monotheistic faith and high standard of morals—were making their way among the Gentiles by the hands of Christian teachers with a success which would have been impossible to the Jewish nation still looking to Jerusalem as the centre of its life and holding to the current conception of what the triumph of Israel in the world meant. In other words, the faith of Israel in the broadest sense had been somehow extricated beforehand from the ruin of the national life ; and it was by just those external modifications of the usual Jewish attitude in the political sphere, for which we believe our Lord to have appealed, that the new propagation of the truth was succeeding, apart from the inner power of faith and inspiration which is assumed *ex hypothesi* in the Christian's reading of the events. The Apostles, by identifying Messiah with Jesus and, even while they expected His speedy return, beginning to claim a kingdom for Him among the Gentiles independent of the Jewish authorities, had clearly abandoned the political Messianism of their race, though they did not at first all realize that the Temple and the Law had to go with it as well. And that this dissociation of the new teaching from Jewish nationalism was not mere indifference to all mundane hopes, but amounted to a friendly recognition of the Imperial order, which was designed to win, and for a time succeeded in winning, the sympathetic hearing of the Roman officials, is certainly the presentation of the case which we find in the Pauline letters and in Acts.[1]

[1] See especially the denunciation of the anti-social attitude of orthodox Judaism, 1 Thess. ii. 15–16, the political teaching of Rom. xiii. 1–7, and the care with which the author of Acts (doubtless

This important feature of early Christian propaganda is independently confirmed by the long delay of the Empire in making up its mind to persecute, and by the remarkable absence of anti-Roman teaching from the other books of the New Testament, with the exception of the Apocalypse, granted the usual interpretation of that writing. It is significant, e. g., that the Epistle of St. James, which in its theology reveals hardly any advance on Judaism, has nothing to say about the wickedness of the Gentile world, but only about the 'double-mindedness' that clings to the converts of Jewish birth, the turbulence of the national character (iii. 13–iv. 10), and the hostility of their wealthy compatriots.

Historically, then, it may be said, the essence of the Old Testament dispensation survived through the shedding of political Messianism, and the opening of the eyes of the Gentile power to the true position of religion in relation to questions of government. If we have rightly traced the inauguration of a new outlook on these particulars in the public Ministry of Jesus, this consideration goes far to establish our main thesis of a direct and conscious influence on the political situation of the world at that time.

It remains, however, to indicate as briefly as may be the particular influence of the Cross in securing the attainment of this victory, when to all human appearance the new interpretation of national duty had been summarily rejected by the Jewish authorities, had not availed to stay Pilate's hand, and did not avert the visible wreck of Israel's hopes in the catastrophe of A.D. 70. We want to trace in the sequel the fulfilment

with apologetic intent) relates instances of toleration and even positive friendliness on the part of Roman authorities.

of Caiaphas's unconscious testimony that the death of the One Man would prevent the *complete* destruction of the Chosen Nation, and to see how in its historical setting (as well as in mystical truth) the Cross provided a twofold redemption, for ' the People ' and for ' the scattered children of God ', by revealing to both their characteristic sin and annulling its effect. So we shall verify the representation of our Lord's choice of death as no blind act of fanaticism, but as a conscious ' policy ' of self-sacrifice to save the world from the results of its own wilfulness.

(*a*) *The argument of the Cross against the Jewish view of the Law.*

We noted in the last chapter those significant features of our Lord's rejection by His countrymen, which were foreseen, consciously accepted, and even contributed to by Himself. It had come to pass as the free and deliberate act of the official leaders of the nation : that act was the logical issue of the political interpretation they put upon their position as God's people, their theory (more or less respectable according as it was Pharisaic zeal or Sadducaic selfishness that inspired it) of racial exclusiveness : yet it involved them in an adverse judgement on One who by their own confession was righteous before the Law, and on One who claimed to be the Messiah they expected—a claim made at their own instance, which they made no attempt to disprove and indeed practically conceded in order to furnish a charge for a Roman trial. Thus it only needed a clear conviction of the conscience that Jesus *was* the Messiah, and any Jew so convinced would see that his nation had been hopelessly wrong in an interpretation of God's promises which could lead

to such a dire result—the great Promise had been fulfilled to the letter, and the sinful People had gratuitously surrendered it to the mercy of their enemies. In this way the obstinacy of the Jews in misreading God's revelation, which imperilled their existence and actually proved fatal to their continuance as an independent nation, was in a real sense checked and turned to good by the divine expedient that had concentrated it on the head of the Redeemer. For henceforward there was no valid ground for sullen isolation in expectation of an unfulfilled promise ; the true Israel was set free at the same moment both from the suspense of unsatisfied hope and from the incubus of a plausible bigotry, which only the startling event of 'Christ crucified' could avail to upset. Not only was the faithless temper of 'asking for signs', i. e. for visible triumph in the world, brought up against this 'stumbling-block' of its own making (1 Cor. i. 23), this palpable surrender of position to the enemy, but the Crucifixion had itself established the claim of Jesus in accordance with prophecy—'the dwellers in Jerusalem and their rulers . . . actually fulfilled the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath by sentence given' (Acts xiii. 27). And so in this double way the Cross provided what was needed for the salvation of the essential Israel to fulfil its vocation in the world, and 'Christ crucified' became 'for the called (among the Jews) Christ the power of God' (1 Cor. i. 24). Messiah by His death had established to the end the veracity of God in making good the promises given to the fathers (Rom. xv. 8), and had condemned for ever the narrow nationalism and misinterpretation of the Law which had been the barrier to the progress of Israel's faith. The steps of the argument are all im-

plicit in the new light which burst upon St. Paul on the road to Damascus. The vision of the glorified Messiah would not by itself have been enough to change his course; he asks for the credentials—Who art thou, Lord? And the identification with 'Jesus whom thou persecutest' not only opens up the evidence of prophecy to certify the Messiahship, but condemns in a moment the zeal for the Law which caused this terrible hostility; and there at once follows the whole corollary of a Gentile mission and the new gospel of faith (see St. Paul's own unfolding of the implicit process of thought, Acts xxvi. 17, 18 and Gal. i. 16). The purely eschatological faith, which modern writers represent as the motive power of the early Church, and in which the Crucifixion would have been only an episode to be quickly nullified by the Second Coming, was *not* enough to make the great change: the central emphasis came more and more to rest on the Suffering and Risen Messiah, that is, on the proof that the Promise had already been fulfilled sufficiently for present purposes, abrogating the nationalist interpretation of the Law, which was only intended to be of force till Christ came, and indeed condemning it as a barrier to be utterly broken down, seeing that it had crucified the Christ.

(*b*) *The argument of the Cross in the conversion of the Gentile world.*

The sin of Paganism which, embodied in the outlook of the Roman Empire, threatened disaster to the truth of Judaism was blindness to the independent spiritual value of religion. 'The world in its wisdom knew not God.' The passionate faith of the Jew, therefore,

appeared (and, it must be admitted, with some justification from experience) as nothing but a dangerous hindrance to the smooth working of the beneficent machine of government ; the only religion that could be tolerated was some national cult that would subordinate itself utterly within its racial limits to the Imperial power, or, better, a universal one to give sanction to that power but still in strict subordination to it. Jesus Christ, at one fateful moment, presented to Pilate a new conception of religion, one that made the spiritual claim to authority which Judaism made, but free of the anti-social exclusiveness and hostility to the rights of government which had fostered the distrust of the Imperial authorities. By putting to death One who by Pilate's own admission was innocent from the Imperial point of view, the worldly power committed a crime which threw into high relief its own folly in ignoring all spiritual claims. In this event lay the opportunity for reaction in the mind of Paganism, whenever it should be realized what gracious and humanizing power—what social value for the world—was contained in religion as newly set forth by Christ. This appeal to the world was worked out, not only in the proclamation of the historical fact of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, but by the reproduction of the Cross in the lives of His followers and particularly in their attitude to the pagan power. The first Epistle of St. Peter lays down clearly the place of the Cross in the Christian's armoury for impressing and winning the world. As their Master suffered though innocent, and ' when He was reviled, reviled not again ', so the disciples are to meet the storm of persecution which is bursting upon them among the heathen by patient steadfastness in innocent conduct, giving no occasion

for the authorities to find actual wrongdoing among them : they are to submit to all lawful commands, and this very patience in ' suffering wrongfully ' will lead the heathen ultimately to ' glorify God in a day of visitation ' (1 Pet. *passim*). And this, historically, was the method by which the pagan world was brought to accept Christianity through the long agony of the Roman persecution. The Empire at last saw the criminal folly of proscribing and torturing a body of men who taught a religion which was of value to the world in its moral beauty and gave no excuse for the suspicion that it involved disloyalty to government. So, at least in one sense, it was that ' Christ crucified ' made possible ' the gathering in one of the scattered children of God '. Doubtless, as Prof. Kirsopp Lake and others have pointed out, the already existing idea of the death of the god in the Mystery-religions provided a place for the preaching of the Atonement among Gentiles : but also we can hardly doubt that the Cross, in the sense that I have tried to indicate, played a necessary part in opening the eyes of pagans to the power of spiritual truth independent of material success. We have evidence of the impression made on the world by the mysterious endurance of martyrdom by the early Christians. And we may say that it was due to this necessary feature of Christianity, that it came before the world not as a series of intellectual propositions, which might have been accepted as human wisdom without any surrender of the blighting materialism of pagan life, but as a supernatural force of which the roots were acknowledged to go deep down in the old revelation of God to the Chosen People.[1] For Christ had been the ' minister of the Old Covenant to

[1] Rom. xi. 17–21.

establish the veracity of God' not only in 'making good the promises given to the fathers' but 'that the Gentiles also should *glorify God* for mercy shown', that is to say, should accept the truth as coming to them with divine sanction superior to the material interests of the world (Rom. xv. 8 f.), and acknowledge at last that 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men' (1 Cor. i. 25).

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VI

(pp. 109–11, 125–7)

THE LIFE-AND-DEATH POWERS OF THE SANHEDRIN UNDER THE PROCURATORS

'Could the Jews have executed Jesus themselves?

In the foregoing account both of our Lord's anticipation of death and of the events of the Passion, the view has tentatively been adopted that to obtain a Roman execution was not the necessary corollary of the determination of the Jewish authorities that Jesus should be killed, but a distinct and subsequent contrivance on their part to achieve their end, increasing their guilt at least from the Jewish point of view, and contributing also to the completion of the divine plan of victory.

This view, if admissible, throws light on the probable application by our Lord to His own case of Isa. liii, with its suggestions of special ignominy of punishment following on national rejection, an application which would not have been so unexpected as it apparently was to His disciples, had it been an admitted condition of government in Judaea that condemnation by the native authorities involved execution by the Romans; and it emphasizes, for the same reason, the unique insight which our narratives imply to have been manifested in Jesus' detailed foretellings of the event. In following the course of the proceedings leading to the Crucifixion, I have ventured to utilize this view in

explanation of the change of procedure against Jesus involved in the two trials, with the suggestion that the delivery to Pilate was an afterthought necessitated by considerations of expediency after the turn that the Jewish trial had taken. Not that the rulers had never thought of resorting to the Roman power, for, according to Luke xx. 20, that was the principal design of the question about the tribute; nor did they aim at anything short of His death (vide Mark xi. 18 and parallels, xiv. 1 and parallels); but in the actual proceedings taken, up to the Jewish sentence of death, the narratives contain no hint of bringing in the Roman executive authority; rather they depict an eager search for some ground of conviction which would appeal to the Jewish mind as deserving of death; for, had the High Priest been contemplating all through a Roman trial, or even a Roman execution of a Jewish sentence, he would hardly have fallen back so readily on the supposed proof of blasphemy as rendering any other charge superfluous. So far, then, apart from other knowledge, the narrative would suggest that Christ's enemies hoped to destroy Him through their own procedure without having recourse to the procurator, except perhaps to obtain a formal ratification which would not require any justification of the sentence to Roman conceptions of guilt; and there is nothing in the Gospel story up to this point inconsistent with the theory advanced that the Jews at first intended to inflict the death-penalty themselves, but that when they came, probably at the morning council, to realize the inexpediency of attempting it with such a slender *αἰτία θανάτου* (Acts xiii. 28) as that to which they had resorted, they then started *afresh* upon an accusation before Pilate. (See Matt.

xxvii. 1, 2: '. . . took counsel against Jesus so as to put him to death [superfluous, if the only possible and consistently intended means to that end were a reference to the Roman authority!]: and having bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pilate the governor.')

But to propound the view that the Jewish death by stoning was possible in this case, or could ever have been thought of, brings us up against the common assertion that on the introduction of direct Roman rule in Judaea in A.D. 6, all native right of passing capital sentence, or at least of executing it, was definitely taken away in that area. It may be useful, then, for the purpose of illustrating a subsidiary point in the interpretation of Christ's death from the political point of view, to examine once more the position of the Jewish rulers in this period as to the power of life and death, and to see what evidence there is for any such regulative principle of government, for the actual practice of the time, and for the theory held by the Jews themselves. The alleged evidence is scanty and doubtful of interpretation, and there is no great presumption involved in attempting to substantiate the view taken in the text by a fresh consideration of the probabilities.

The Procurator's 'ius gladii'.

Josephus (*B. I.* ii. 8. 1) states that the first procurator, Coponius, was sent out μέχρι τοῦ κτείνειν λαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ Καίσαρος ἐξουσίαν. This, with the parallel passage, *Ant.* xviii. 1. 1 ἡγησόμενος Ἰουδαίων τῇ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἐξουσίᾳ, refers to the status of the Judaean procurator in the Imperial system as possessing the

ius gladii. His was a separate government, independent in all ordinary matters of the Syrian propraetor, or of the central administration, and therefore he could put to death any subject for an offence against his government (e. g. Barabbas), with the reservation for Roman citizens of the right of appeal to Rome. This is an obvious fact, and it is put forward prominently in the Fourth Gospel's account of the present case (John xix. 10, 11). But it tells us nothing as to the limitation of native rights on native questions. Rather the very constitution of the province stated by Josephus in the same passages—as subjected to a 'procurator' 'of equestrian rank' only—marks it as one of those governments 'in which, on account of special tenacity in adhering to peculiar national customs, or on account of the rudeness and savage state of the country, the government could not be carried on by the usual methods' (Schürer, div. I, vol. ii, pp. 44–5). In other words, it was expedient to have in Judaea a man who, though nominally supreme, could be easily kept in hand or replaced if difficult questions arose, and there is abundance of evidence throughout the period that the Jews could go behind the back of the procurator, and that, as in Pilate's case, he might be just as much afraid of them as they were of him. We even hear of procurators finding it expedient to send provincials to Rome for trial (Schürer, ib., p. 60 and note). The possession of the *ius gladii*, therefore, does not prove that the procurators could not allow in any circumstances a native execution, if probabilities to the contrary can be alleged; on the other hand, their inferiority of rank prepares us to find a certain looseness of control and absence of fixed rules of government.

The Statement of John xviii. 31, and the Attitude of Pilate himself.

In John xviii. 31 Pilate says: 'Take him yourselves and according to your law κρίνατε αὐτόν. The Jews reply: 'It is not permitted to us to slay any man.' This answer at first appearance would seem to mean: 'We want you to try him, because it is a capital case, and we are not allowed to deal with such at all.' If this is taken as an honest statement in this sense, it is, so far, a support to the usual view in the particular form that the right even of trial in capital cases was reserved to the Roman government. It gives no support to the existence of the lesser restriction, more likely to be admitted by the Jewish theory of things, the right to try, but not to execute; for in that case the Jews would have said: 'We have tried', or 'We will try him, but we are asking you to execute our sentence.' But is it likely that they would allege with truth, or at least as anything more than a possible view, the extremest state of limitation, which, if it were a recognized fact, would have rendered all their previous efforts against Jesus waste of time, and enabled Pilate to disregard their wishes without fear? It was a statement palpably inconsistent with their later tone in xix. 7. Only is it intelligible as a momentary *argumentum ad hominem* thrown back at the procurator, either in the spirit of grumbling, or (if there was outward submissiveness) with some purpose to serve by overstating the case in favour of the Roman power. We have to remember that the writer is *ex hypothesi* describing the ruses and fencings through which a great crime was brought about, and to take one argument used by the Jews as serious historical

evidence for the governmental conditions of Judaea is as precarious as it would be to suppose from Pilate's words (xix. 6) that it could have been a natural and ordinary proceeding for the rulers to crucify Jesus themselves! And, as has already been pointed out in the text of this essay, the following verse (John xviii. 32) shows the special significance attached by the author himself to the words. It is some fresh wilfulness of untruth or national apostasy in the Jews' working out of the crime that fulfilled Christ's prophecy of His crucifixion. The mere justifiable statement of an obvious fact in the condition of national affairs, which according to the common theory would have been present to their minds when they first began to compass their Victim's death, would not have been singled out at this point for such impressive comment. And, therefore, I infer either that it did not represent the truth at all, or that it was an admission and surrender which, in the Evangelist's view, the nation had no need or right to make.

Another possibility of interpretation is that the Jews took Pilate's 'Judge him according to your law' as meaning 'not only try, but put him to death'; and that, not wanting the injunction or permission to do what they had already contemplated but had abandoned, they excused themselves by this *ex parte* statement of theory. This would agree with the representation of the Gospel of Nicodemus already quoted in the text, and might be regarded as evidence that native trials and executions could take place, permission having been given by the procurator.[1]

[1] Another view of these words is that they do not refer to Roman restrictions at all, but mean that the Jews by their own law might not inflict capital punishment at the time of the Feast. So Chryso-

In any case acts are better evidence than words, and Pilate's attitude in all the Gospel accounts is hard to reconcile with the view that there were any well-known hard-and-fast restrictions of Jewish rights in this matter. He clearly felt the want of definite accusations that he could understand, which would not have been necessary if the restriction was only that the governor had to execute the sentence. Those who, like Hausrath (*Time of Jesus*, vol. i, p. 82), think that Pilate crucified Jesus in execution of a Jewish sentence and for fear that the Jews would appeal to Rome if he refused to do so, have to meet the absence of all Jewish charges from the Synoptic account of this trial and the express statement (John xix. 12) that the information against himself which he feared was the carelessness of Imperial interests, not disregard of native rights. On the other hand, there was evidently a general feeling in his mind that the rulers had a plausible claim to have their wishes considered in a capital case, even though those wishes must be translated into terms of a Roman trial—a feeling which would not have been there if it was an established principle that they had no voice whatever in sentences of death.

Cases under the later Procurators, A.D. 48–62. *St. Paul. The story about St. James.*

At the beginning of Cumanus' rule (48–52) there are two instances where the Roman authority was invoked to punish offences against native law: one, an indecent

stom (*Hom.* 83 *in Iohn.* 4): εἰ δὲ λέγουσιν· Οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν ἀποκτεῖναι οὐδένα, κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνόν φασιν. And this commentator goes on to quote the stoning of Stephen as proving the permissibility (with reference to the Jewish Law, apparently) of killing people in another way, but 'they wanted to crucify Him, in order to make a display even of the manner of His death'.

insult at a Jewish festival; the other, the destruction of a copy of the Torah (*B. I.* ii. 12. 1, 2; *Ant.* xx. 5. 3, 4). But as the accused were both Roman soldiers, and in the case where execution was ordered it was summary, we can infer nothing as to the powers of the Sanhedrin over native offenders, or as to whether a procurator would try issues of Jewish law—a conclusion which would seem to require proof, if we are to hold that as an established rule capital *sentences* were reserved to him.

But the prolonged squabble arising out of the conflict of Jews and Samaritans and issuing in the banishment of this procurator, is of interest to us as illustrating the actual dependence of the Judaean governor when the Jews made trouble on behalf of their rights, and the special consideration with which the emperors treated them. It even looks as though we have a case of a *Roman officer* being handed over to *native execution* (if not trial) for murder. (*B. I.* ii. 12. 7 *Κέλερα δὲ δεσμώτην ἀναπέμψας εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα παραδοθῆναι Ἰουδαίοις πρὸς αἰκίαν ἐκέλευσε καὶ περισυρέντα τὴν πόλιν οὕτω τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποκοπῆναι.*) Beheading, or 'killing with the sword',[1] was recognized by Jewish theory as a legitimate punishment for murder, and was practised not only by Herod Antipas (Mark vi. 27), but by Herod Agrippa I (Acts xii. 2), a stickler for Jewish law. Permission to kill even a Roman citizen was, we know, accorded to the Jews for the special offence of passing the Temple barrier, though there is no evidence that the permission extended to other cases where native rights were violated, as sometimes in 'free' communities (vide Schürer, II. i. 188 n.). On the other hand the statements as to the tribune Celer are vague,

[1] Mishna, Sanhedrin ix. 1.

the parallel passage in *Ant.* xx. 6. 3 suggesting that it was only the ' torture ' or ' insult ' which was conceded to the Jews ; and, of course, the ultimate authority for the procedure, whatever this may have been, was the emperor's.

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The evidence for Roman restriction in the proceedings against St. Paul (Acts xxi. 27–xxiv. 27) is qualified by the two circumstances that they began with a riot necessitating the tribune's interference, and that St. Paul was discovered to be a Roman citizen. But even in such a case Claudius Lysias recognized ' their *συνέδριον* ' (xxiii. 28) to the extent of summoning it to try the accused, *freed for the nonce from Roman bonds*, for his own information as to the nature of the accusation (xxii. 30). This meeting St. Paul himself recognized as a trial according to the Jewish law (xxiii. 3), and he knew that he was being charged with capital offences from the Jewish point of view (xxi. 28), though he did not intend to let himself be killed unjustly (xxv. 10–11). And, while the tribune evidently, for the reasons mentioned above, thought he ought to keep a tight hand on the proceedings throughout and use his own judgement thereon, his letter to Felix rather implies (xxiii. 29) that, if the charge relating to ' their law ' *had* been in his view ' worthy of death or imprisonment ', and if the plot had not supervened, he might have executed, or sanctioned the execution of the Sanhedrin's sentence, or given the initial permission to deal with the case throughout (saving, of course, a citizen's right of appeal), without reference to the procurator. According to the longer reading of Acts xxiv. 6–8 [1] (omitted by the leading manuscripts,

[1] See the margin of R.V.

but by no means unanimously rejected by the critical texts), the Jews before Felix make much of their right to arrest Paul and try this case by their own law, which right they complain was violently interfered with by the tribune. Even without the support of this reading, we may fairly infer by the actions of Felix that the question of procedure entered into the case. For if it was an established rule that the Jews could never start proceedings in their native court without permission from the Roman authority, he need not have adjourned the case for the arrival of Lysias to testify (presumably) as to the riot (xxiv. 22 *τὰ καθ' ὑμᾶς* perhaps means 'your rights of procedure' as opposed to *τὰ περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ*, the problem of the new faith); and if it was at all a settled view in Imperial administration that capital cases could not still be dealt with, even regarding a Roman citizen, in accordance with Jewish principles of law, it would have been useless to expect bribes from a man who would have been secure already from the peril of a Jewish trial, or to hope to gratify native opinion by reserving the enemy for a purely Roman investigation (xxiv. 26, 27).

Under the next procurator, Festus, one scheme of the Sanhedrists against St. Paul was for assassination (xxv. 2, 3), which may be evidence that they were giving up hope of *obtaining* a trial and condemnation on Jewish charges. They did not, however, think they had no *claim* to independent rights in the matter, for before they had to fall back on the procurator's offer of a hearing at Caesarea, they seem to have made the curious request for a 'sentence' against him [according to the best attested reading], by which he would in some way be delivered up to them by the procurator, before he had a chance of defence (xxv.

15, 16 ; cf. also 11 *οὐδείς με δύναται αὐτοῖς χαρίσασθαι*). This is obscure, but taking into consideration Festus's answer in verse 16, it looks as if the procurator, when he had heard the case, might have authorized a trial, or even merely an execution, by the Sanhedrin. However this may be, the delimitation of rights was apparently quite in doubt, and it is only after St. Paul's full exposition of the nature of his mission before Agrippa that the latter declares that there had been no valid reason against dismissing the Jews' claims at once (xxvi. 32, cf. xxiv. 27).

St. Paul's line in self-protection, considering that he must have known, and indeed at Philippi showed himself very particular about, the principles of Imperial administration, is significant. Would he have recognized without protest the right of the High Priest to try him on capital charges (xxiii. 3) if Roman rules forbade it ? Would he have been so anxious throughout, if his security from Jewish procedure was established ? Note that he used his right of appeal even against a Roman hearing at Jerusalem (xxv. 9, 10), evidently thinking that that might lead to *his death* (ib. 11), which surely would have been impossible except on Jewish charges issuing in that result either through the permission or the action of the procurator.

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The incident of the stoning of James in *Ant.* xx. 9. 1, which is ascribed to the interregnum between Festus and Albinus, can be quoted both in favour of restriction in theory and of freedom in practice. If the passage is authentic (it is open to suspicion from its interest to Christians and its reference to ' Jesus called Christ '), the High Priest took advantage of the interregnum to assemble *συνέδριον κριτῶν*, to accuse James and

others of breach of the law, and to give them over to death by stoning. Such action is attributed to the 'boldness' of this Annas the Younger, and to the severity of the Sadducaic party (to which he belonged) in the matter of punishments. But a party of 'the most moderate men, who were particular about the (Roman ?) laws' sent complaining of this conduct to Agrippa, who eventually deposed the High Priest for it; and also, going to meet the new procurator, they 'instructed' the latter that it was not permissible for Annas *καθίσαι συνέδριον* without his permission, and Albinus *πεισθεὶς τοῖς λεγομένοις* wrote angrily about it to the High Priest. If genuine, the story throws interesting light on the favourable attitude of Agrippa towards Christianity which seems to be implied in Acts xxvi. 32 just mentioned; and it possibly gives a clue to the Jews' demand from Festus—they had wanted permission *καθίσαι συνέδριον* for the trial and execution of St. Paul. But the evidence to be gathered from this passage for our purpose goes no further than this—that some Jews thought (and had Agrippa on their side) that the Roman permission was required before the Sanhedrin could sit as a court, which, if that was all,[1] tells on the side of freedom rather than on that of the usually supposed restrictions; further, that even this restriction was openly repudiated by the high-priestly family that was in power at the time of the crucifixion; and, lastly, that the new procurator had to be instructed (!) in this way as to his powers, which does not look as if there had been certain well-

[1] Note that the charge and punishment were directed against the High Priest, not against the whole Sanhedrin, which would have been equally guilty if capital proceedings were recognized to be forbidden ground to them.

defined limitations of the native judiciary ever since direct Roman government came in.

The Talmudic Statement.

The only remaining positive statement that can be alleged for the supposed restriction is in the Palestinian Talmud (Yer. Sanh. 18 *a*, 24 *b*), a fourth-century compilation: 'Capital cases were taken away from Israel forty years before the destruction of the Temple.' This is usually said to be a date given 'in round numbers' for the commencement of direct Roman government. In any case the evidence is too late to be of much historical value. But, seeing that 'forty years before the destruction of the Temple' brings us almost exactly to the year of the crucifixion, it would be interesting if we have here an intentional *apologia* for the nation's activity in that tragedy. We might well imagine it being thrown up against the Jews as an aggravation of their guilt, that of their own accord they had surrendered their Messiah to Gentile trial and execution, and conjecture that the same false excuse which we have supposed them to put forward at the time (John xviii. 31) thus hardened into a piece of orthodox history shaped exactly to meet the case. There at least exists a parallel to such apologetic invention in the Talmudic story that our Lord was stoned first and 'hanged' afterwards—to minimize, probably, both the apostasy of leaving the vindication of God's Law wholly to Gentiles, and the cruelty of the crucifixion. (See the references in Keim's *Jesus of Nazareth*, vi, pp. 68 n., 75 n., and Horford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (London, 1903), pp. 83 ff., 406. [Note that all supposed references to Jesus in the Talmud are dubious *to the very last degree*.—H. D.])

The Freedom of the Sanhedrin in the Period after the Crucifixion (St. Stephen).

In Acts v. 33 we are told that the Sanhedrin wished to put the Christian Apostles to death, and in dissuading them Gamaliel gives no hint that such action was *extra vires*; while the incidental statement of verse 26 bears out the view taken on pp. 125–6, that what restrained the rulers from drastic action on their own authority against the new teaching was not limitations imposed by the Roman government, but fear of the λαός. But the most inexpugnable evidence against any recognized and settled restriction of the life-and-death power is the Sanhedrist persecution connected with the martyrdom of St. Stephen. It is vain to dismiss this as the story of a popular outbreak violating recognized rules. If so, why did the procurator allow it to go on? Why was not Caiaphas deposed? As a matter of fact, there is every sign of regular procedure, so far as Jewish opinion would go, in the case of Stephen. Violent demeanour in a court was not extraordinary for this nation (cf. Acts xxiii. 10), and was indeed regarded as proper symbolism by the rules about the rending of clothes on the proof of blasphemy.[1] It is true that no sentence is recorded by Acts vii, but St. Paul afterwards (Acts xxvi. 10, 11) says he had 'given his vote' for the slaying of the martyrs; and other traditional rules for the carrying out of the sentence were observed—the going outside the city,[2] the prominent place given to the 'witnesses'.[3] Saul's own action in the whole persecution testifies both to the far-reaching authority exercised by the Sanhedrin at this time, and to the fact that *the death sentence was*

[1] Mishna Sanhedrin vii. 5. [2] Sanh. vi. 1. [3] Sanh. vi. 4.

frequently inflicted (Acts xxii. 4 ἄχρι θανάτου: xxvi. 10, 12). It is hardly conceivable that such a strict Pharisee would have lent himself to what might be regarded as irregular proceedings, or that one who gloried in being a Roman citizen would have thus flouted an established restriction of the Imperial government! Either the story of the persecution is unhistorical, or the Roman administration was consistent with the utmost freedom of action on the part of the Sanhedrin in internal affairs.

Summary and General Considerations.

There is thus nothing that can be called direct and certain evidence for the supposed restriction either as to the passing of death-sentence or as to its execution by native rules. We do not know even that the formal sanction of the procurator had to be obtained. What evidence we have seems to show that the relations between the Roman administration and the native authorities were very loose in Judaea and largely a matter of opinion and tact from both sides. Certainly the new state of things from A.D. 6 was regarded as an increase in the importance of the Sanhedrin—the constitution then became an 'aristocracy' as opposed to a monarchy (Jos. *Ant.* xx. 10)—and the Jews beforehand expected more independence under the Roman government than under the Herods (*Ant.* xvii. 9. 4). Even members of the Herodian family 'most desired *freedom and to be put under a Roman governor*' (αὐτονομία is the word used in the parallel passage *B. I.* ii. 2. 3), and the official petition from the nation was to the same effect (*Ant.* xvii. 11, *B. I.* ii. 6). Whatever the rule may have been in this matter in the other provinces, I should say that all the evidence as regards

Judaea points to the procuratorial period being one of transition and experiment, in which the respective powers of the Roman and native authority were undefined. Three views are possible if there was any recognized restriction more than a formal ratification of what the native authorities did—either (1) no sentence on a capital charge could be given, or (2) if given it had to be executed by the Roman power, or (3) permission had to be obtained, after which the native trial and execution could proceed. No. 1 seems to me to be disproved by the reluctance of Pilate to act boldly on his own judgement of the case before him, and still more by St. Paul's recognition of the Jewish court at his first examination. No. 2 also does not agree with the procedure before Pilate, nor do any of the supposed statements of limitation take that form. Of No. 3 there seems to be some suggestion in Pilate's words, 'Judge him according to your law', in the case of Celer, in the requests of the Jews to Festus and St. Paul's anxiety in that case, and in the doubtful story about the death of James—possibly also (by inference) in the privilege of executing 'even a Roman citizen' who had passed the Temple barrier. But the outstanding fact is that there is no certain evidence of any of these restrictions being clearly and universally admitted—there is no sign of them in what happened in the great persecution connected with the death of St. Stephen—and there seems nothing to prevent the surmise that the same Sanhedrists who acted thus at a later date, would have executed their sentence on our Lord, chancing the approval or disapproval of Pilate, had they thought that the popular sentiment would have backed them up.

[It is appropriate that a writer in a 'St. Deiniol's Series' should find himself travelling on the same road of inquiry, and on the same side of the road, as Dr. Döllinger. This scholar takes the view that the Jews might have executed our Lord, and discusses their powers in an Appendix. (*Christenthum und Kirche* (1860), pp. 40, 453–7; translated as *First Age of the Church*, vol. i. 63, ii. 352–8.) I do not think that all his arguments will hold, but I have obtained some suggestions from what he has written.

I am also indebted to the Sub-Warden of St. Deiniol's, the Rev. H. Danby, for courteously allowing me to read in manuscript his edition, with Introduction, Translation, and Notes, of the Mishna Tract 'Sanhedrin'. He discusses there with full references this question, but comes to a different conclusion. To him are due the Rabbinic references and one note in this Appendix.]

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Liberty, Rev. Stephen

The political relations of Christ's ministry.

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